THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

REV. DAVID NELSON, M.D.

THE

CAUSE AND CURE

OF

INFIDELITY:

INCLUDING

A NOTICE OF THE AUTHOR'S UNBELIEF

AND

THE MEANS OF HIS RESCUE.

BY REV. DAVID NELSON, M. D.

SECOND STEREOTYPE EDITION, CORRECTED BY THE AUTHOR.

PUBLISHED BY THE
AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
150 NASSAU-STREET, NEW YORK.

[185-?]

BT 1210
.N4
1850

Entered, according to Act of Congress, in the year 1841, by DAVID NELSON, in the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the Southern District of New York.

Right of publishing transferred to the American Tract Society

Gift-
C. W. Richmond
Je. 27. '17

M.A. 2384.38

The President of Centre College, Kentucky, has well said in reference to this work, that "after all the learned, eloquent, and argumentative treatises which have been published, on different branches of the Christian evidences, something was still needed—something adapted to the peculiar tastes and condition of our community," especially to many vigorous minds of the West, where the author's life has been chiefly spent, "to excite curiosity, awaken attention, and stimulate inquiry—something which should bring down abstruse argument to the apprehension of men in general, and present striking facts to arrest the attention of the indifferent and the sceptical. Facts drawn from history, science, and observation, are here placed in a strong and often startling light, and there is an earnestness, a personality, a warm lifeblood of reality running through the whole, which gives to the written argument much of the interest and power of an oral address."

CONTENTS.

CHAPTER I.

CAUSE OF INFIDELITY, ... 13

CHAPTER II.

Man a fallen being: hatred of God; examples; loving darkness, 14

CHAPTER III.

A trifling falsehood influences human belief against the Bible more than gigantic truth in favor of it: Etna and Vesuvius; strata of lava; Chinese records of antiquity, ... 19

CHAPTER IV.

Facts such as unbelievers do not learn, ... 26

CHAPTER V.

Men receive truth slowly, but error promptly: conversation with a statesman, ... 29

CHAPTER VI.

Scoffers shall come, ... 31

CHAPTER VII.

Scoffers are unacquainted with the facts of the Bible: predictions in the epistles to the seven churches in Asia, ... 34

CHAPTER VIII.

The subject continued: conversation with a senator; predictions of Babylon, ... 39

CHAPTER IX.

The subject continued: Tyre, ... 47

CHAPTER X.

The subject continued: Damascus; important inquiries; the ploughman, ... 49

CHAPTER XI.

The great and the learned do not acquaint themselves with Bible facts: prophecies of Egypt, ... 55

CHAPTER XII.

The subject continued: prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem, 59

CHAPTER XIII.

Scoffers of the last days are wilfully ignorant of Bible language: an aged Kentuckian, ... 68

CHAPTER XIV.

The subject continued: prediction of Nineveh, ... 71

CHAPTER XV.

The subject continued: the volcano, ... 73

CHAPTER XVI.

The subject continued: the lodge, ... 75

CHAPTER XVII.

Men have loved darkness rather than light: conversation between a member of Congress and a physician, ... 76

CHAPTER XVIII.

The subject continued: the resurrection, ... 80

CHAPTER XIX.

The subject continued: testimony of Pagan writers, ... 88

CHAPTER XX.

Inconsistency of unbelievers: testimony overlooked; Acts of Pilate, 92

CHAPTER XXI.

Unceasing cause of Infidelity in its various forms: testimony of Celsus, ... 95

CHAPTER XXII.

The subject continued, ... 100

CHAPTER XXIII.

Inconsistency and credulity of the rejecters of the gospel: the aged school-teacher; pagan testimony to the character and number of the early Christians; their patience under suffering; were they either deceived or deceivers? 102

CHAPTER XXIV.

Men who cast away the Bible are credulous in the extreme: the sceptical moralist; influence of Christianity upon morals, . 114

CHAPTER XXV.

Men adopt false opinions without inquiry: a citizen of New York, 121

CHAPTER XXVI.

CURE OF INFIDELITY, ... 123

CHAPTER XXVII.

A remedy proposed: honest and thorough investigation, . . . 125

CHAPTER XXVIII.

An example: a young man in Kentucky, ... 128

CHAPTER XXIX.

A second example: a gentleman of the bar, ... 135

CHAPTER XXX.

Aversion to commentaries: we may avail ourselves of the facts they record; predictions of Rome, ... 138

CHAPTER XXXI.

Case of an infidel who began to read: a merchant of Tennessee, 151

CHAPTER XXXII.

Use of commentaries: prophecy of the locusts, ... 157

CHAPTER XXXIII.

Value of historical knowledge: a merchant of Kentucky; the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream; a history of the world, . . . 160

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The subject continued: the stone cut out without hands, . . 170

CHAPTER XXXV.

An example: an educated young gentleman, ... 177

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Works on the evidences of Christianity recommended, . . . 179

CHAPTER XXXVII.

Testimony resisted: concluding remarks on the remedy proposed; a wealthy agriculturist of the West, ... 182

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A further remedy: the all-powerful; evidence of experience, . 188

CHAPTER XXXIX.

Illustrations: a man of middle age, ... 192

CHAPTER XL.

Illustrations: a professor of religion, ... 196

CHAPTER XLI.

Illustrations: family worship, ... 198

CHAPTER XLII.

Illustrations: divine influence; power of prayer, ... 202

CHAPTER XLIII.

The remedy denied to none, ... 206

CHAPTER XLIV.

Atheism, ... 214

CHAPTER XLV.

The subject continued: the doctrine of chance; the atmosphere; effects of electricity; heat and cold; evaporation; density of the soil, water, air, etc.; iron; proofs of design; the Andes; the Nile; Greenland; the solar system; the moon; questions; inquiries answered; farewell, ... 216

CHAPTER XLVI

THE AUTHOR'S UNBELIEF AND MEANS OF RESCUE: mode of descent, ... 251

CHAPTER XLVII.

False statements: glass, ... 254

CHAPTER XLVIII.

False statements: eunuchs, ... 256

CHAPTER XLIX.

Seeming truth, but actual falsehood, ... 259

CHAPTER L.

The subject continued, ... 263

CHAPTER LI.

The subject continued: sneers of infidels, ... 265

CHAPTER LII.

Examples of apparent truth but actual falsehood in infidels; Volney's Ruins, ... 270

CHAPTER LIII.

Further examples: claims of various religions, ... 278

CHAPTER LIV.

The subject continued: counterfeits, ... 283

CHAPTER LV.

Further discoveries: a New Englander in Illinois; a few signs in religion, ... 287

CHAPTER LVI.

Further inquiry: the Age of Reason; Scott's Commentary; further investigation, ... 292

CHAPTER LVII.

The influence of religious belief at the time of death: observations on man's departure, ... 299

CHAPTER LVIII.

The dying compared with those who think themselves dying, . 305

CHAPTER LIX.

The subject continued: a revolutionary officer, ... 308

CHAPTER LX.

The subject continued: dying fancies, ... 311

CHAPTER LXI.

Disposition of unbelievers to credit accusations against Christians; prejudices against the Jews; character of the Mosaic law, . 314

CHAPTER LXII.

Influence of an early acquaintance with the Bible: what induced the people to receive the law of Moses; fidelity and humility of the writers, ... 327

CHAPTER LXIII.

Commemorative institutions: fourth of July, ... 339

CHAPTER LXIV.

Evidence of prophecy: fifty-third of Isaiah, ... 344

CHAPTER LXV.

Evidence of prophecy: Daniel's seventy weeks, ... 349

CHAPTER LXVI.

Evidence of prophecy: Daniel's four beasts; an outline of history, 356

CHAPTER LXVII.

Prevalent ignorance of the Bible: examples; predictions of Egypt and Syria, ... 377

CHAPTER LXVIII.

The last resort: appeal to reason; the goodness of God; doctrines inquired after, ... 384

CHAPTER LXIX.

The last resort: testimony of enemies, ... 389

CHAPTER LXX.

Concluding summary, ... 391

Brief sketch of the author's life, ... 395

PREFACE.

THE following work is not a compilation of the evidences of Christianity. It was written with the hope of exciting those who need such research, to read *many* authors on that subject. A book which does not contain a summary of arguments against infidelity, may provoke an appetite to read volumes where those arguments are found. The evidences of Christianity are not fully contained in any half-score of volumes now existing.

The most of those who have written, have aimed at nothing more than an abridgment of this subject, because of its unusual extent. We may present reasons for investigation, and we may persuade others to read, in a shorter space than that which is required to contain a full array of facts in support of revelation. The following pages were written with the design of urging the multitude to become informed concerning the book of books, the Bible. The call for such an attempt—the necessity for it at the present time—we think fairly inferrible from the following facts.

FIRST FACT. It is true, that in almost every congregation there are some more or less imbued with infidelity, who do not avow it. They are not confirmed sceptics; but Satan's grand effort to prevent their commencing the work of repentance, or seeking the pardon of sin, is made by suggesting unbelieving doubts. The minister who has been long hoping and looking with unceasing anxiety for their conversion to God, never was thus harassed himself, and does not dream of their real condition. Again, there are countless thousands of the youthful and the uninformed, who are thus kept inactive. Temptations of unbelief cripple or prevent their exertions. Books on this subject are found, for the most part, only in ministers' libraries, and they are scarce there; and, moreover, those found there are not calculated altogether to fit the cases we are now noticing. Those authors aim at cavils the most plausible only, and strike at infidel objections most worthy of answer; whereas the youth thus injured are very often influenced by arguments *puerile* in the extreme, and so *feeble* that the better informed would never believe they could be used.

Second fact. The adversary of souls would not have young professors and possessors of religion grow in grace. To prevent it, he injects into their minds cold, unbelieving cavils, which embarrass and retard their march. They read on the subject authors that are powerful and unanswerable in the truths they present; but they have no effect on the young inquirers, for they are not sufficiently simplified and extended. They are invincible in the view of those who are familiar with *chronology* and *history*, but they suit the *educated* alone. It has been long true with the author of the following pages, that after trying to speak on the subject, he has been addressed by young persons, who have told him that they rejoiced he had noticed a certain infidel quibble—that it had long harassed them—that they knew it was weak and puerile, but had still been annoyed without having heard the proper answer given.

Third fact. Infidelity is now growing and spreading to an extent the blindness of the church does not suspect: pocket volumes of false statements, infidel manuals, painted perversions of history, etc., are spreading profusely; while opposite publications are growing more rare.

There are many thousands more in our land now growing up in the darkest unbelief, than is known or suspected by any except those who once themselves fought in that division of Satan's army.

Fourth fact. Those who read on this subject in the church are few, and Christians are, to a great extent, but poorly qualified to instruct, or to answer the objections of sceptics against their holy religion.

It has a bad influence on the youthful spectator who notices a leader in society, "a grey-headed professor," unable to answer the cavil of an uninformed mocker. It has a bad influence on a youthful inquirer, who applies for assistance against some sophism of infidelity to one of God's people, and does not receive it.

And more. Is not the age of infidelity approaching, along with the time of terrible judgments?

In a great part of Catholic Europe, are not large masses of the population almost total *atheists*?

In Great Britain, do not multitudes of the people openly renounce God's holy volume?

Is not our own nation walking down the same track?

THE

CAUSE AND CURE OF INFIDELITY.

CHAPTER I.

CAUSE OF INFIDELITY.

INFIDELITY is produced by two causes, acting conjointly. The primary, or more remote cause, is man's depravity; the second, or approximate cause, is man's want of knowledge. As it regards the first or original cause, *man's wicked nature*, we can readily see how it would bend his belief towards the side of falsehood. It must incline him to reject the sacred volume, which enjoins every thing that is righteous, self-denying, pure, and holy. Again, we can easily understand how this first cause of unbelief, man's sinfulness, must tend towards the production of the second cause, his *lack of information*. It retards his labors in searching after truth; it aids in continuing his want of knowledge; it prevents his activity in search after facts which sustain the truth. As it regards the secondary, or proximate cause, *want of knowledge*, it sounds strange to speak of the *ignorance* of the *learned*. This seeming contradiction will be fully explained after a time. For the present, we must begin with the original cause, man's *depravity*.

CHAPTER II.

MAN A FALLEN BEING.

The Bible is not true, if man is not prone to evil. The holy page has two modes of expression in holding up the fact of man's depravity. The first is his hatred towards God; the second is his love for falsehood. Let us look at each of these assertions.

1. *The carnal mind is enmity against God.*

This seems to the unconverted man as though it must be false. He is not conscious of any enmity against God. He thinks usually that he loves his Creator. Of course, if we talk of his *hatred*, we do not gain his assent. The reason it seems to him that he *loves* where he really hates, is simply this: he does not hate that which *he* calls God. He well approves the character which he himself has given to the Creator; but this character always differs in one or more traits from that which is drawn of God in the Bible. It always resembles, more or less, the character of the individual who has drawn it. A part of the character accords with the sacred page; but a portion of it, more or less, belongs to the man who draws it; of course he does not hate it. This has been true in every age; and is now a fact, wherever men are living.

Examples. Could you have asked the ancient Scandinavian, as he stood before you with a purse in one hand and a spear in the other, "Do you love

God?" he would have answered you in the affirmative. Then had you inquired, "Who is God?" he would have replied, "*Thor*, the god of battles and of plunder." The warrior loved such a deity—a part of the character belonged to the barbarian. Omnipotence and other traits were correct, and were received from true tradition; but holiness and purity the man did not love, and therefore did not receive into his creed as belonging to heaven. Could you have asked the Greek, at Athens, two thousand years ago, if he loved God, he would have replied, *Yes*. "Who is God?" Answer, "Bacchus, Venus, or Mars." A deity of wine, or revelry, or sensuality, or war, he did not hate; but if you had placed before him the full character of the God of the Bible, as the apostles did, he would have turned away in anger. Go, now, and converse with the enfeebled Asiatic concerning his enmity to God, and he will look astonished at your assertion. He is willing to give up his life in the service of his god. But ask after this deity, and he will name one of lust, cruelty, and pollution; one resembling, to a great extent, the man who stands before you. If you claim his notice to the God who loves justice and humility, purity and peace, he cannot bear to hear you. Just so it is in the land of Bibles and of light, so it is in England or America. Go to that Universalist, and ask him if he hates God. He is indignant at the question. He thinks he loves his kind Creator ardently; he thinks he never did hate God. And it is true that he does love a god whose character resembles that of the man before you, in some prominent traits. But

place before him the God of the Bible—one who will say, *Depart*, to the wicked; one who will not take pollution and the rejecters of mercy into heaven; one who will see the smoke of their torment ascend up for ever and ever; and the Universalist will tell you earnestly that he hates such a God as that. Just so it is with the Deist. He gives to God a character which he thinks *rational;* he loves that character; it resembles, in some main points, the man who frames it. He cannot think that "the carnal mind is enmity against God," for he esteems God a being who has done, and will do very much, in accordance with a plan which he himself esteems rational and proper.

It is true, we cannot exhibit the case of deists, as to what they love or hate, as plainly as the case of others, because there is such an unending variety in their creed. Go to one hundred deists, and you will rarely find two of them believing alike. They all agree in rejecting the Bible; but on many very important considerations—whether God will or will not punish the wicked—whether the soul goes out, or certainly lives on after death—whether the world is to meet ruin, or continue for ever—if the wicked are to be chastised, what sins are most dangerous—they have no sameness in their plans. Many deists, on questions of breathless interest, will refuse to give you any answer: they will tell you they do not know; they have no belief on the point, however interesting. At other times, you will find them maintaining that man's *reason* was given him as a lamp to enlighten, and as a guide to direct him in these

matters. But ask them what kind of conduct here will most add to, or detract from happiness hereafter, or what kind of life we may certainly look for in the next existence, and no two of them will give you the same replies to these inquiries. The *reason* of a thousand of them seems to have led in as many different directions. That Christian denominations should differ, appears to them exceedingly absurd and reproachful; but that reason, which they say God has given as our only teacher, should give either no opinions, or very different opinions among *their own* number, does not call forth a bitter remark. If the Bible is disclaimed, thus far they all agree; further than this they do not ask after agreement, or regret it should there be a thousand different creeds. A God according to the Bible, they do not love; one conformed to their own vague ideas, they do not hate.

2. *Man's love of falsehood.*

"Men have loved darkness rather than light." In this assertion, *light* stands for truth; and the word *darkness* means falsehood. It does not seem to any one that he prefers falsehood to truth. The most prejudiced man thinks himself impartial. It is so on any subject. The most vehement politician thinks himself unbiassed in his judgment; the most deadly enemy, in speaking of the one he hates, will tell you that his views are not the offspring of passion, yet he certainly would believe evil of his neighbor more readily than good, even when this good is true. We might then very certainly expect, that the man who wishes to live for ever, to whom *anni-*

hilation has no pleasing look, and who even wishes strongly to believe the Bible, would be far from feeling, or believing, that on this subject he would cherish darkness rather than light. Nevertheless it is true. Although not in a situation as deplorable as the man who gnashes his teeth on religion, still it is true, that one small cunningly devised falsehood will influence him further than one hundred plain and forcible arguments in favor of revelation. A man may stand on the side of a precipitous mountain, and long for the top, yet the impetus of an ounce will push him further down than many times that force will cast him up. One who desires the valley below, can go there without a struggle. The man who has sinned may desire the summit of truth, but he stands on the declivity of a sinful nature. Every transgression or sensual indulgence has added to the darkness of his soul without his knowing it. Some examples of this must be given in the following chapter, to make the fact easily understood.

CHAPTER III.

A TRIFLING FALSEHOOD INFLUENCES HUMAN BELIEF AGAINST THE BIBLE MORE THAN GIGANTIC TRUTH IN FAVOR OF IT.

Example 1. An English traveller, Brydone, wrote and published a description of mount Etna. He describes her craters and her extended slope, covered occasionally for twenty miles or more, along the side of the mountain, with vines, villages, and luxuriance. These are sometimes destroyed by the river of melted lava which issues from the mountain above, many feet deep, and a mile—perhaps more, sometimes less—in width, bearing all before it, until it reaches the sea and drives back its boiling waves. After this burning stream has cooled, there is seen, instead of blooming gardens, a naked, dreary, metallic rock. Sometimes many eruptions occur in the course of a year, breaking out at different parts of the mountain, and sometimes none for half a century. The traveller found a stream of lava congealed on the side of the mountain, which attracted his notice more than others. He thought it must have been thrown out by an eruption, which was mentioned by perhaps Polybius, as occurring nearly seventeen hundred years since. There was no soil on it. It was as naked as when first arrested there. The particles of dust floating through the air had not fallen there, so as to furnish hold for vegetation, and these vegetables had not

grown and decayed again and again, thus adding to the depth of the soil. Such a work had not even commenced. He tells us that on some part of that mountain, near the foot, if you will sink a pit, you must pass through seven different strata of lava, with two feet of soil between them. Upon the supposition that two thousand years are requisite for the increase of earth just named, he asks how seven different layers could be formed in less than fourteen thousand years. The chronology of Moses makes the world not half as old. The Englishman was jocular at this discovery, and his admirers were delighted at what seemed to them a confutation of the book of heaven. How many thousands through Europe renounced their belief of revelation with this discovery for their prop, the author of this treatise is unable even to conjecture. It seems that many parts of Europe almost rang at the news of the analogical theory. True, the traveller only *conjectured* that he had found the lava mentioned by the ancient writer; but no matter, supposition only was strong enough to rivet their unbelief. The author has conversed with those in America, and on her western plains, who would declare they believed not a word of the Bible, because there was no soil on a stratum of lava, which, in all probability, had been there long.

Another learned Englishman, an admirer of the books of Moses, wrote to those who seemed to joy so greatly in their new system. He told them, that inasmuch as they seemed fond of arguing from analogies, he would give them an additional one. He reminded them that the cities of Herculaneum and

Pompeii were buried by the eruption in which the elder Pliny lost his life, near seventeen hundred years since. Those cities have lately been discovered; and in digging down to search their streets, six different strata of lava are passed through, with two feet of earth between them. And the famous Watson tells them, that if six different soils near Vesuvius could be formed in seventeen hundred years, perhaps seven might be made elsewhere in five thousand years.

Might we not suppose, that those who had renounced their belief of Christianity, after reading some *conjectures* concerning Etna, would have resumed their faith as soon as these Vesuvian *facts* were placed before them? No, it was not so. It was easy to descend, but they never reascended. *Men love darkness rather than light.* Thousands who snatched at the objection with joyful avidity never read the confutation. They never inquired for an answer. Those who read were afterwards silent, but remain unaltered. A lawyer who stood so high with his fellow-citizens, for worth and intelligence, that he filled many offices of trust, had his credence of the sacred page shaken by reading the imaginary system built on the surface of Etna's lava streams. He took the book to a friend, to show him what reason we have for casting off our reverence for the Bible. This friend turned over a few pages of the book, where this same traveller, after telling how many eruptions sometimes happen in the course of a month, goes on to narrate the following history:

"Our landlord at Nicolasi," he says, "gave us an account of the singular fate of the beautiful coun-

try near Hybla, at no great distance from hence. It was so celebrated for its fertility, and particularly for its honey, that it was called Mel Passi, the Honey Land, till it was overwhelmed by the lava of Etna; and having then become totally barren, by a kind of pun its name was changed to Mal Passi, the Mean Land. In a second eruption, by a shower of ashes from the mountain, it soon reassumed its ancient beauty and fertility, and for many years was called Bel Passi, the Beautiful Land. Last of all, in the unfortunate era of 1669, it was again laid under an ocean of fire, and reduced to the most wretched sterility, since which time it is known again by its second appellation of Mal Passi."

The lawyer was asked if his difficulties were in any way obviated by this rapidity of change from soil to nakedness, and from nudity to soil again, narrated by the same original discoverer of the whole theory. He answered in the negative, and continued obstinately to cast away the book of God. Thousands of cases happen continually, where the individual is as readily and as speedily turned into the path of infidelity, and when once there, continues to trace it with invincible pertinacity. *Men*, without knowing it, *love darkness rather than light.*

Example 2. When some travellers in Asia wrote back that the Chinese record made the world many thousand years older than the Mosaic history does, how it rejoiced a host of listeners. Oh, how they clapped their hands! We thought, said they, that the Bible was a fabrication, unworthy of belief. If any wrote, or said to those who were thus becoming

scoffers at revelation, "Do not be too hasty in your conclusions: how can you tell but that national vanity may have had some share in exciting those who speak of their *celestial* empire, to claim a spurious antiquity?" they turned away, or closed their ears with satisfied confidence. They seemed to wish for no further information. After a time, some additional items were published from Chinese history, such as the following: They tell the name of their first king, which would sound in the ear of some as a corruption of the word Noah. The time they assign for his reign corresponds with the age of Noah. They speak of this king as being without father; of his mother being encircled with the rainbow; of his preserving seven clean animals to sacrifice to the great Spirit; that in his day the sky fell on the earth and destroyed the race of men, etc. When we remember that the waters of the sky did this in the days of Noah; that Noah was the first of the postdiluvian race, and thus without father; that the rainbow is interestingly connected with his history; that he did take into the ark clean animals by sevens, part of which were offered in sacrifice—we begin to discover that the Chinese account is nothing more nor less than a blotted copy of the truth. See Stackhouse's History of the Bible.

We gather from Moses, that between the creation and the deluge there were ten generations of men, surpassing us greatly in longevity. It would be no tortured inference to suppose them vastly our superiors, both in strength and stature. This kind of men, the heathen in ages past were in the habit of calling

gods, after their death. The Chinese account speaks of ten dynasties of *superior* beings, who ruled in their country a thousand years each, before the sky fell on the earth. It is not hard to see that this is only a different and a singular manner of relating the same facts. But why did—and do now—many of the seemingly learned choose to suppose that each father ended his race before the son began to live? It was for the purpose of stretching out the time, between the deluge and the creation, to ten thousand years. Moses informs us that each of these ten generations did extend near a thousand years; but he lets us know that a son and his father walked much of their earthly race together. The journey of each was long, but it was a simultaneous travel. For the purpose, if possible, of extending the earth's chronology beyond the dates of revelation, multitudes have taken partial extracts from *hearsay* records; and then, to prevent these fragments from agreeing with, or upholding the history they hate, have twisted them with labor and ingenuity—failing even then to construct a passable cavil against the truth. What is the reason of this strange hungering and thirsting after mean falsehood, rather than the wonders of glorious truth? It is because men love darkness rather than light. Those who had cast away all reverence for holy writ, as soon as some one said in their hearing that the Chinese record contradicted Moses, never seemed to inquire further. They asked not after any additional account; or if they were shown that all these heathen traditions were simply the truth, preserved in a dress more or less awkward, they were

silent; but they did not return to the place where they once stood. They continued scoffers at Christianity.

The author has been in the habit of conversing with unbelievers whenever he could obtain the privilege, during the last eighteen years. Having once been of their number, he has since felt for them a kindly solicitude, as he hopes, moving him, at a prudent opportunity, to speak of heavenly things, although at times even at the risk of their displeasure. He has found that certain items of history or tradition, such as might seem to militate against holy writ, they receive readily, and remember long. Out of the ten thousand facts of a different description, they treasure none. They seem either not to hear, or they understand slowly, or forget very soon. We have been naming some of the kind which secure their attention and their recollection. We will now notice a few out of the mass of items, such as they either do not learn or do not hold.

CHAPTER IV.

FACTS SUCH AS UNBELIEVERS DO NOT LEARN.

Under this head it matters not where we begin There is no necessity that we should quit the record already before us. If you will go to that opposer of Christianity who appeals loudly to the part of Chinese chronology already discussed, and ask him a few questions, you will find that part of Asiatic history with which he is utterly unacquainted. Ask him what he thinks, when the Chinese history speaks of Yao, their king, declaring that in his reign the sun stood so long above the horizon that it was feared the world would have been set on fire; and fixes the reign of Yao at a given date, which corresponds with the age of Joshua the son of Nun. See Stackhouse. You will find, in nine cases out of ten, the objector knows nothing of that part of the Chinese record. Out of the countless items of this character, which, if compiled, would fill so many cumbrous volumes, he has treasured scarcely one: his taste has not craved them with avidity, or he remembers not. We are not now speaking merely of the unlettered and the feeble-minded. This is true of the senator in legislative halls; of the minister plenipotentiary to foreign courts; of the man whose information seems to extend almost everywhere. Of the Bible, and of ancient literature connected with the Bible, he is

uninformed: the cause is his appetite for darkness rather than light. The Latin poet Ovid amuses the school-boy greatly, in his fanciful narrative of Phaeton's chariot. This heathen author tells us, that a day was once lost, and that the earth was in great danger from the intense heat of an unusual sun. It is true, that in attempting to account for this incident of peril and of wonder, the writer, as was his custom at all times, consulted only his imagination, and clothed it all with an active fancy. But our notice is somewhat attracted, when we find him mention Phaeton—who was a Canaanitish prince—and learn that the fable originated with the Phœnicians, the same people whom Joshua fought. If you ask an unbeliever of these incidents, or of the common tradition with early nations that a day was lost about the time when the volume of truth informs us that the sun hasted not to go down for the space of a whole day, you will find that he had never thought on these points: they are not of the character which he is inclined to notice.

Let not the young reader suppose for one moment, that if the many octavo volumes which might be made, were really filled by the compilation of such items and placed in his hands, this would constitute the evidence of Christianity. Far from it. These books would scarcely form an introduction to that entire subject. Such corroborative history or traditional fragments are mentioned here, because they serve to exhibit the fact, that man is inclined to the side of error without knowing it, in matters of religion. The way in which things have been and are

received, exhibits our disposition unequivocally; and it is so important that we know plainly, whether men by nature do or do not turn away from holy light, that we will pursue this branch of the subject a little further. The cases to be cited are merely referred to as examples, out of a multitude almost endless, which any one may notice who is much in the habit of exchanging sentiments with his fellow-men.

CHAPTER V.

MEN RECEIVE TRUTH SLOWLY, BUT ERROR PROMPTLY.

The author once conversed with an able statesman, and in the confidence of a private and social interview, inquired after the main prop of his unbelief. He answered that he had read a statement in a respectable print, which seemed to him strong indeed against the common faith. It was, that at a given spot in Europe, bones had been found under a rock six hundred feet in depth. He said the Mosaic account allowed the world a youthful date; but that to him it was utterly incredible that a sheet of rock could be formed and grow above these bones, six hundred feet thick, within the space of five thousand years. After a class of facts connected with such subterranean discoveries, he did not seem to have inquired. It is a fact, that God's record speaks of the fountains of the great deep having been broken up. It is a fact, that if those waters were ever called to the surface, so as to cover our highest mountains, they retired again, for they are not there now. It is a fact, that the billows of a sinking ocean would be strong enough to carry bones, or more massive bodies, under the largest rocks, and into the deepest caverns of the earth; and the turmoil of the mighty deep could sweep hills of clay or sand upon that which was once exposed. It is as hard to believe that bones remained undecayed during the growth of six hundred

feet of rock above them, as it is to suppose that a rushing stream carried them far along into a rocky cave. If this learned man were asked to account for the forests which were found with a hundred feet of earth heaped over them, or how it is that all really learned chemists and geologists agree that the present surface of the earth is a young surface, he did not seem to have thought on such facts. If asked concerning extracts from Berosus the Chaldean, Nicolaus of Damascus, Manetho the Egyptian, or others, what they may have said of the ruins of a great ship, in their day remaining in the mountains of Armenia, he did not appear to have read, or to have noticed points of this nature. Whether any ancient author mentioned the remains of this vessel as covered with pitch, which the natives used as a charm against disease, stating that a man once landed there when the world was covered with water—why a village at the foot of mount Ararat should always have borne a name which signifies *the city of the descent*—or of a thousand incidents of this nature, he seemed never to have inquired. He knew nothing of historic fragments of this kind; but that bones had been found deep under a rock, and that therefore the Bible was not to be obeyed, he seemed to conclude readily, and to remain confident.

That men love darkness rather than light, will be exhibited in another form, and by a different process, in the following chapters.

CHAPTER VI.

SCOFFERS SHALL COME.

'Knowing this, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, saying, Where is the promise of his coming?" 2 PET. 3 : 3–5.

IN the preceding chapters, some objections often urged against revelation have been noticed. They are certainly characterized by imbecility. It is more than probable that the youthful reader is ready to exclaim, "These are not my objections: my difficulties are of another kind; and remain unanswered in all the productions I have ever read in favor of Christianity." And they are likely to remain unanswered, unless some author should be able to write a book as extensive as all the volumes contained in a well-filled library. There are many faces belonging to the inhabitants of earth now alive, but no two of them are just the same. So it is with the unending difficulties and objections in the minds of those who lean towards error, rather than the light of the sacred volume. We might remind any one reader that we do not know what his particular objections are, and therefore cannot answer them, unless we could take up the millions of cavils on the surface of the ocean of darkness. If your difficulties could be known, they would resemble such as have been noticed and met by many authors. Some additional examples will be given, as we attempt fairly to hold up to view the general principle, or the cause of unbelief, namely,

wilful ignorance. But before we proceed, it will be necessary to guard by preliminaries against mistake.

Many are ready to suppose that the wilfully ignorant have no desire for knowledge. This is a misunderstanding, against which we should be well guarded. The boy at college who has passed off his weeks of study in idleness and frivolous amusement, as the day of public examination approaches has a very strong desire to know as much as his classmates. Still, he is justly censured as wilfully ignorant. The careless, loitering, and work-hating apprentice may have a desire for knowledge and skill in the business of his employer, yet his deficiencies are punished as wilful ignorance. Many unbelievers desire knowledge on the great subject, but they never undergo the labor of research. We suppose that of all the scoffers who were to come in the last days, and who were to be wilfully ignorant, there is scarcely one but would be willing to receive *historic* knowledge at least, provided an angel could just grasp it in his hand, and throw it into his brain, without any exertion on his part. But the toil of research he never encounters. He may snatch at some plausible objection to truth, as he hears it repeated; but to impartial investigation he is an utter stranger. As for those who think they have investigated very laboriously, but who have not investigated at all, we will notice them in considering another part of this subject. The millions of scoffers who have come, and who now live, are ignorant of Bible facts and Bible language. The profound and the unlettered, the wealthy and the indigent, the talented and the stupid, are ignorant of Bible

facts and Bible language. To some, this may sound strange, but it is not hard to prove. The matter may be easily tested. The scoffers live *now*, and you may approach and converse with them. During a ten-year's search, you are not likely to find *one* exception to the general statement. There was one who tried this for eighteen years, to see if he could meet with any one who cast away the Bible, and who was at the same time acquainted with its contents, and with the ancient literature connected with the Bible. He found some who at first declared themselves acquainted with the subject, but who really were not. After asking them, in an affectionate manner, a few questions, they generally confessed that their knowledge did not extend far. But this fact can be seen more clearly while looking at examples of *wilful ignorance*.

CHAPTER VII.

SCOFFERS ARE UNACQUAINTED WITH THE FACTS OF THE BIBLE.

EXAMPLES. Those who have "come scoffing" in the present age, are utterly unacquainted with Bible facts and Bible language. We first notice Bible *facts*. In exhibiting such cases, we are like the man who stands by an immense magazine of wheat. He may take a handful and hold it out to view; but he cannot exhibit each grain in the mass to the eye of any purchaser. It would be a task endless and painful.

ITEM 1. In the second and third chapters of Revelation may be found the letters written by St. John, at the direction of Jesus Christ, to seven churches situated in that part of the world which we call Asia Minor. To each church was sent a different message, a different threatening, or a different promise. These prophetic declarations were long in fulfilling, but have all come to pass. It is common with the totally uninformed in chronology to say, when prophecy is named, "Perhaps this was written after the event came to pass." For the sake of such, it is here remarked, that the event about to be noticed occurred more than nine centuries after the book of Revelation was much written against by haters of the gospel, and defended by lovers of the truth. Inasmuch as a book is written before its contents are greatly controverted, even the most unlettered will be able to

understand dates in this case; and will be satisfied, after nine hundred years of discussion, that the book was in existence. For the sake of those who may fear Christian partiality, when we come to speak of the fulfilment of these seven messages, we will quote mostly from infidel authority. They will scarcely suspect an undue favor towards the sacred volume, in those who have hated its name, written against its authority, and mocked at its doctrines. To the church of Ephesus the Redeemer ordered John to write, "Remember, therefore, from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of its place, except thou repent."

The author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, Gibbon, one of the most accomplished, unrelenting haters of the Bible, that ever spent half a lifetime in writing against it, says, "In the loss of Ephesus, the Christians deplored the fall of the first angel, and the extinction of the first candlestick of the Revelation." He tells us this was accomplished by the Ottomans, A. D. 1312. In Ephesus, at the present day, there are none who even bear the Christian name, so completely is the candlestick removed.

To the angel of the church in Philadelphia, John was commanded to write, "Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth." It was indeed an hour of trial to all the churches, when the Mahometan, with his naked sword, gave the member choice to receive the Koran for his Bible,

and Mahomet for his prophet, or to see his sons and daughters go into servitude, his dwelling blaze, and to suffer his blood to stain his own hearth. From this temptation it was especially improbable that Philadelphia would be saved. This we may learn from the language of the same unbelieving author, who seemed almost startled himself at what he was compelled to record. Hear him speak. "Philadelphia alone has been saved, by prophecy—or courage. At a distance from the sea, forgotten by the emperors, encompassed on all sides by the Turks, her valiant citizens defended their religion and freedom above fourscore years, and at length made terms with the proudest of the Ottomans. Among the Greek colonies and churches of Asia, Philadelphia is still erect; a column in a scene of ruins." We have reason to hope that God has had new-born souls there in every age.

To the Laodicean church the Saviour wrote, "Because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth." It seems to us, that words could not be placed on paper expressing a more deep and decisive abhorrence. What are the words the infidel historian has chosen? He says, "The circus and three stately theatres at Laodicea are now peopled by *wolves and foxes*."

The church at Smyrna next claims our notice. In the sacred volume we find the Lord repeatedly telling his servants, that a day should stand for a year in the occurrence then foretold. This may be more fully considered when we come to mention the subject of prophecy. That the ten years' persecution, during

which the church at Smyrna suffered, under the reign of Diocletian, was a cruel and a bloody one, perhaps no one has ever questioned, and we need not pause here to quote history for its proof. The Lord had, long beforehand, commanded an apostle to tell them, by letter, "Behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days. Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," etc. A minister of the gospel once felt a desire, and sought an opportunity to converse with a number of rejecters of Christianity, who possessed talents and literature. Between him and some of these a friendly intimacy existed; some of them were admired by their countrymen, and known to the nation by their political eminence. He felt pressingly solicitous to make inquiries such as the following: "Do you never find your curiosity at least, somewhat awakened, while reading the letters to the seven churches of Asia? Suppose it had been of Philadelphia that the historian had said, with truth, 'It is inhabited by wolves and foxes;' or suppose it had been concerning Sardis that the Redeemer's promise of salvation from the hour of trial was penned; how triumphantly would the event have been noticed by the opposers of holy writ. Suppose the Saviour had said of Philadelphia, 'I will spue thee out of my mouth.' Suppose that gospel light had still shone at Ephesus, even faintly, showing that the candlestick had not been removed. Suppose no marked distress, of ten years' continuance, had ever prevailed at Smyrna. Or, suppose some comforting promise had been recorded concern-

ing Laodicea. Vary either the history as it transpired, or the message which was sent, in any one out of a hundred ways; and what would have been the result?"

The inquirer found that they did not know particularly what the Lord had written to any one of those churches. They had either not noticed, or they had certainly not remembered what had been the precise fate of Ephesus, Sardis, or Laodicea. With the long drawn train of Bible facts, as numerous as the pages of that singular book, they were entirely *unacquainted.* Let no one suppose that these items are here presented as the evidences of Christianity: by no means. They do, we believe, possess much interest, but the foundation is broader than these can make it. A few out of the wide multitude are here called to view, merely to show the wilful ignorance so strangely belonging to those who speak against light.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

ITEM 2. A man who was an able Senator in Congress, from a state where talent was not scarce, once said to a Christian friend, "I have heard the prophecy concerning the destruction of BABYLON, mentioned as evidence that the writer saw into futurity. With me it weighs nothing. Any one might guess that a proud city would come to ruin; and the common tendency of things to revolution might bring it to pass. It requires no inspiration to foretell the decay of perishing things." His friend discovered that some things he did know and remember with readiness, but that of other very many and very obvious facts he was totally uninformed. He understood with alacrity, and he was correct in his doctrine, that if the overthrow of Babylon had been all that the prophet foretold, that alone would have been no certain evidence that his pen was guided by a superior hand. But on the difference between a prediction with specifications and one without them, he appeared never to have meditated. The difference between a prophecy—like the heathen oracles—where one naked event is declared without any of the particulars, and a circumstantial prediction where the items of time or manner are all related, must be attentively noticed by us, or our judgment in such cases will be vague and infantile. If you foretell the

about to state came to pass from three to seven, nine, and eleven hundred years after his death. Or again, concerning the common Greek version of the Old Testament, the famous Gibbon says, scoffingly and deridingly, that the Egyptian king gathered it from the villages of Judea. But the king of Egypt of whom he speaks, lived three hundred years before the Saviour was crucified. Then, if you do not fear to receive the account from this champion in unbelief, if you do not fear he was too partial to the Bible, the events we are now about to call to view occurred from three to seven, nine, eleven, or twenty-one hundred years after the Old Testament was translated into Greek. We can only say to the young reader with an immortal soul, that if no more could be said on this point than even the little we have now told you, we think you might doubt the security of your refuge. But if you are determined to seek a flimsy hiding-place, where even the infidel arrows will pierce you, then you must go there, and there remain.

The first prophecy noticed shall be that which was cited by the able politician, to show that little was proved by its alleged fulfilment, namely, the fall of ancient Babylon. Here the reader is invited to turn to different books of the Old Testament, and there note how the event was mentioned by different prophets. The name of the general who should lead the army—one hundred and fifty years before his birth—the manner of the assault, the condition and conduct of the besieged, where the victors were to find the treasures, etc., are all declared. But at present it is our

plan to hold up to view only that part of these predictions which has come to pass since the Old Testament was translated into the Greek language.

Isaiah 13 : 20–22. "It shall never be inhabited, neither shall it be dwelt in from generation to generation; neither shall the Arabian pitch tent there; neither shall the shepherds make their fold there. But wild beasts of the desert shall lie there; and their houses shall be full of doleful creatures; and owls shall dwell there, and satyrs shall dance there; and the wild beasts of the islands shall cry in their desolate houses, and dragons in their pleasant palaces," etc.

1. Let it be noted, that it was very unlikely that this particular kind of desolation should happen to any city. We should never conjecture concerning London or Paris, should these cities come to ruin, that they would be deserted by man while lofty palaces or stately dwellings were there, inviting the houseless wanderer at least under their friendly shelter. Centuries rolled by after these threatenings were written. Babylon received another and another overthrow. Still, these did not unpeople her streets. After a time, history informs us, Seleucia and Ctesiphon were built; the luxurious and sensual nobles of Babylon must follow their monarch and his court; they left their palaces, and their splendid abodes were deserted in a singular and unexampled manner. The servants and the dependents of these wealthy sons of revelry and authority, followed their lords to gaze at or participate in their feasting. Those who lived by selling their merchandise to the opulent followed, and the streets were in fact abandoned to unbroken silence.

2. Must it follow of course that the ferocious beasts of the islands shall inhabit dwellings more splendid in some respects than any we have ever seen? By no means. This was not the natural result, for still enough of the indigent remained to rule the brutal creation that have not reason for their guide. But continue to watch the progress of events. The Lord has spoken, and shall he fail to make it good? After a time a despotic potentate craves a more splendid hunting-ground; he repairs the walls of the ancient city and makes it the area of his chase. Their houses are then full of doleful creatures; owls dwell there, and dragons in their pleasant palaces.

3. But it was not to be expected that these houses could stand always, and they did not. It was not to be expected that Babylon could continue always the hunting-ground of a king, and it did not. Babylon had stood on a fertile and extensive plain. Will not the shepherd drive his flock wherever vegetation springs to sustain them, if man's dominion does not forbid him? Assuredly he will, if God has not said *nay*. But when the towering edifices of brick had fallen in, the under cellars and vaults afforded such dens and lairs for tigers, wolves, lions, and hyenas, that travellers inform us it was too hazardous for the approach of a shepherd and his flock.

4. But the Arabians move in bands; they delight to wield the javelin; they tremble not at the lion's growl. The Arab will surely pitch his tent there, as he traverses all the deserts of the eastern continent. And he would have done so in defiance of the most ferocious of the forest tribes; but under the extended

and unparalleled rubbish of that spot denounced of heaven, were concealed scorpions, serpents, and reptiles so numerous, and with fangs so envenomed and deadly, that no one could close his eyes in safety under the shelter of his friendly tent.

5. But time will obliterate these dens and hiding-places; these heaps will dissolve and this rubbish will decay. Babylon was in the midst of a rich plain that could not be washed like the hills of Palestine into nudity and barrenness. Will it not be repeopled? Who shall venture to say, "It shall never be inhabited from generation to generation?" Answer, God. He said so, and so it has been.

6. But the Bible goes on to say that it should be inhabited by the bittern, a water-fowl; nay, the book declares that it should become *pools of water*. When did this happen? Answer, in comparatively modern days. Some singularly spontaneous obstruction of the Euphrates caused its overflowing, and travellers tell us that two-thirds or more of Babylon is now "pools of water for the bittern to cry in."

We have not exhibited half the items of history foretold concerning Babylon; but we have noticed enough to illustrate the difference between a vague prediction and a prophecy whose particulars are minutely mentioned. The man of great mind, and in other respects extensive information, who spoke against this prophecy, had acquainted himself with none of these particulars, nor with any of a similar character abounding in the book of God; he only knew enough to make him doubt, to raise difficulties

in his mind. Thus far his religious information extended and no further. This is unquestionably the fact with many of the orators, statesmen, and leading characters of the present day. They have been pressingly engaged in their worldly pursuits. It seemed to them as though they had no time for such research. They indeed had but little love for this kind of labor; but of this last truth, perhaps, they are unconscious. Yet many, it is to be feared, are influenced by them, as was a female of the state of Tennessee. Her husband kept a public-house of much resort. Her friends were much surprised to hear her avow that she had cast away the Bible. When asked her reasons, she said that those of the brightest minds and highest attainments the land contained spoke even deridingly of it as they sat at her table. She considered them much abler to judge in such cases than she was, and refused all further love or reverence for the Man of Gethsemane! We quit for a time the history of Babylon, but we have not done with it. We must proceed to notice other cities and their fate, and then to call up these different cases severally, as so many steps by which we ascend to the summit of an interesting consideration.

CHAPTER IX.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

ITEM 3. The city of TYRE. If the reader will consult the prophets of the Old Testament, he will find the overthrow of this city foretold, the manner of the siege, the name of the conqueror, the number of years before it should resume its former splendor, and its second fall. But these things we will not dwell upon: we attend to those particulars which belong to more modern times, or which took place as it were but yesterday.

1. When a city subsisting by commerce is overthrown, if the many streams of her lucrative trade shall cause a speedy elevation to more than ancient magnificence, the mind of calculating shrewdness might conjecture, that if spoiled again, the winds of traffic might blow wealth and power once more into her ports. The ships of Tyre floated over the seas, and her second growth almost resembled magic. The Lord said she should be destroyed and never built again. Two thousand years are past, but the riches and splendor of Tyre are no more.

2. The Lord ordered Ezekiel to say, "I will *scrape* her *dust* from off her, and make her like the top of a rock." In the siege of Tyre by Alexander the Great—it having been rebuilt on an island a half mile from the shore, and surrounded by a wall one hundred and fifty feet in height—"a mound was

formed from the continent to the island, and the ruins of old Tyre afforded ready materials for the purpose. The soil and rubbish were gathered and heaped, and the mighty conqueror, who afterwards failed in raising again any of the ruins of Babylon, cast those of Tyre into the sea, and *scraped* her very *dust* from off her."

3. It was declared by the prophet, more than twenty-three centuries since, "It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea." Should the desolation be as complete as that of Babylon, who shall carry their nets there to dry them? "The whole village of Tyre," said Volney in his Ruins, "contains only fifty or sixty poor families, who live obscurely on the produce of their little ground, and a *trifling fishery;*" and Bruce describes Tyre as "a rock whereon fishers dry their nets."

We ask the reader once more to treasure up these facts until we shall have mentioned others, so as at last to bring them all into one view.

CHAPTER X.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

ITEM 4. DAMASCUS—"It shall be a ruinous heap." Damascus has not been blotted out, so that no one dwells there; it is not a naked rock; it is not pools of water; it is not peopled by wolves and foxes. This is not the way in which Damascus is mentioned in the book of books. But it has been ravaged and desolated again and again. It was reduced by Alexander, by the Romans, and especially by the Saracens in the year 713, who "miserably devastated it;" and by Tamerlane in 1396, who "put its inhabitants to the sword without mercy." It has been made "a ruinous heap;" and still exists, "the external appearance of most of the buildings being very mean—of some exceedingly so—while many of them are very elegant within."

For several chapters we have been preparing to exhibit the truth that scoffers of the later days are unacquainted with Bible facts. We are now almost ready to make the application.

If you will go to any number of judges, legislators, physicians, counsellors, etc., who speak against the sacred book, and ask them some such questions as we are about to specify, you will be able at once to understand the strange assertion, that the learned are included in the class of the *wilfully ignorant.*

We will here ask the reader some questions, such

formed from the continent to the island, and the ruins of old Tyre afforded ready materials for the purpose. The soil and rubbish were gathered and heaped, and the mighty conqueror, who afterwards failed in raising again any of the ruins of Babylon, cast those of Tyre into the sea, and *scraped* her very *dust* from off her."

3. It was declared by the prophet, more than twenty-three centuries since, "It shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea." Should the desolation be as complete as that of Babylon, who shall carry their nets there to dry them? "The whole village of Tyre," said Volney in his Ruins, "contains only fifty or sixty poor families, who live obscurely on the produce of their little ground, and a *trifling fishery;*" and Bruce describes Tyre as "a rock whereon fishers dry their nets."

We ask the reader once more to treasure up these facts until we shall have mentioned others, so as at last to bring them all into one view.

CHAPTER X.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

ITEM 4. DAMASCUS—"It shall be a ruinous heap." Damascus has not been blotted out, so that no one dwells there; it is not a naked rock; it is not pools of water; it is not peopled by wolves and foxes. This is not the way in which Damascus is mentioned in the book of books. But it has been ravaged and desolated again and again. It was reduced by Alexander, by the Romans, and especially by the Saracens in the year 713, who "miserably devastated it;" and by Tamerlane in 1396, who "put its inhabitants to the sword without mercy." It has been made "a ruinous heap;" and still exists, "the external appearance of most of the buildings being very mean—of some exceedingly so—while many of them are very elegant within."

For several chapters we have been preparing to exhibit the truth that scoffers of the later days are unacquainted with Bible facts. We are now almost ready to make the application.

If you will go to any number of judges, legislators, physicians, counsellors, etc., who speak against the sacred book, and ask them some such questions as we are about to specify, you will be able at once to understand the strange assertion, that the learned are included in the class of the *wilfully ignorant.*

We will here ask the reader some questions, such

as he may ask any who now live and who now deride the Bible.

QUESTIONS. The Hebrew prophets were ordered to utter their denunciations against all the nations round about for their wickedness. They spoke of their hills, rivers, villages, cities, and governments. If these prophets only conjectured or guessed that the events they foretold might or would come to pass, then may we not ask, with some degree of wonder at least, *Suppose it had been said of some other city besides Babylon, that it should become pools of water and never more inhabited?* May not our curiosity be somewhat excited when we notice, that of the thousand proud and wicked cities around, the prophet did not happen to write these things of any, Babylon excepted? And had they been written of any other one city, town, or village, that was or has been upon the face of the earth, we know of none where their truth could be seen. These, and the other particulars we have noticed, came to pass many centuries after these books of prophecy were written, according to infidel authority, or after unbelievers wrote against them.

May we not inquire, with some degree of wonder, *Suppose some writer of the Old Testament had happened to conjecture and write concerning Damascus, Sidon, Jerusalem, Jericho, Nineveh, or any city, town, or village, except Tyre, that the soil on which it stood should be scraped away, and fishermen's nets rest upon its nakedness, who could point to its accomplishment?* On the broad surface of the earth, or along the protracted shores of the

ocean, the prophet was surely fortunate to hit upon the only spot where these things did happen. Long and dreadful calamities were threatened to Jerusalem; but suppose it had been said that owls and tigers should inhabit pleasant palaces there, how many thousands now would clap their hands, rejoicing that such a conjecture was ever made. Suppose some one, two thousand years ago, had ventured to guess that the time would come when a shepherd would be afraid to drive his flock where Palmyra of the desert then stood, or through Athens, Ephesus, or Rome; name any spot you please but one, and where would his reputation stand?

An admirer of the Bible who once sought, during many years, an opportunity to converse on this subject with those of cultivated minds, asked questions resembling those above oftener than he can name or remember. He found that the reason they had not thought with some degree of interest on some such Bible facts was, *they did not know that such facts existed.* They could not think what God had said of Persia, Egypt, or Syria, for indeed they did not know what he had said, or that any thing was written about almost any nation or city that could be mentioned to them. Those of them who had read the Bible through, did not know that the things we have named were in the Bible. A thousand similar facts were equally unknown to them. If the learned unbeliever of the present day is thus wanting in the ancient literature connected with the Bible, it will not be hard to fancy the condition of the uneducated scoffer. Thousands who range the streets of our

large cities seem to be beyond remedy. Their furious hatred towards all that is meek or holy, prevents their listening to expostulation; and their ignorance renders them incapable of weighing argument on almost any subject. Their confidence in their edifice, however, would no doubt be much shaken, were it not that they fancy they have substantial support in their sameness of belief with the learned and the great.

We were to show that scoffers are wilfully ignorant of Bible language, but we must first devote a few more chapters to *facts*. It is important that we should have a fair view of the fact, that men have some fondness for darkness, but none for light. This can be seen, if we show that men will not inform themselves, even where they condemn. It is possible that some reader may be in the state of mind in which was an old and wealthy merchant, who fancied that he had fully investigated the matter. "I have," said he, "heard these things spoken of all my life; I have looked through the Bible; I have thought on these things as I rode on my horse, as I lay on my bed, as I stood behind my counter, and I cannot believe, because I am unable to understand the subject. Many things in religion seem to contradict my plainest reason."

Mark this case. The preceptive doctrines of Christianity are plain enough for a child to understand, and lovely enough to captivate all that is not enmity against God. The old man was not attempting to obey any of these; he only had his eye directed towards that which might appear difficult to him. So

far as he *could see*, he was not trying to perform; but on more mysterious points, spoke of an investigation which was no investigation. We must illustrate this. Suppose there was a ploughman who had some strange dislike towards the science of chemistry; he professes to disbelieve the whole of its facts and theories. Suppose he declares that many doctrines of chemistry contradict his plainest common-sense. He takes up a receipt for making ink, and avers, that to speak of mingling several clear white fluids together, and expecting black as the result, contradicts his plainest reason.

Again, he says that chemists speak of mingling two cold substances until each shall become hot without the addition of a third; but declares that this contradicts all that is rational. He finally adds, that he can never attempt to practise that which he cannot understand; that he has read of alkalis, caloric, affinities, etc., until all appears to him a mass of confusion, and a jargon of nonsense. That he has thought on these things as he rode on his horse, as he lay on his bed, and as he ploughed in the field. And to crown all, chemists differ among themselves.

At all this the philosopher would smile, and tell him that in order to practise the most useful part of chemistry—making salt, washing clothes, or baking bread, etc.—it was not necessary he should understand all that the Creator knows about it. He would tell this doubter that he might easily try the matter, take different substances and do as directed, and he would soon know the truth of these things *experimentally*. Finally, he would tell him, that if he

must search into deeper matters, he must *investigate* in *reality;* that his much talked of research had left him ignorant still; that this ignorance could be removed, and that he certainly should not condemn, with a confident air, until it was removed.

The doctrines of the Bible may be known, and their usefulness tested practically. Experimental knowledge is the safest and the best in the world. But if any are resolved that they will have a different kind of evidence or none, let them see that their wilful ignorance is removed before they venture to decide for eternity.

CHAPTER XI.

THE GREAT AND THE LEARNED DO NOT ACQUAINT THEMSELVES WITH BIBLE FACTS.

ITEM 5. EGYPT—All the early history of Egypt, so impressively foretold by the prophets, we pass over, and come at once down to the particulars that are accomplishing *at present*—to those things which have been fulfilling in all recent years, as well as in ancient days. We may notice those predictions concerning Egypt, which the reader, whether young or old, has lived to see fulfilled.

The words of Ezekiel: "And I will bring again the captivity of Egypt, and will cause them to return into the land of Pathros; and they shall be there a *base* (Heb. low) kingdom. It shall be the *basest* of the kingdoms; neither shall it exalt itself *any more* above the nations; for I will diminish them that they shall no more rule over the nations. And I will make the rivers dry, and sell the land into the hand of the wicked; and I will make the land waste, and all that is therein, by the hand of *strangers:* I the Lord have spoken it. *I will also destroy their idols*, and I will cause their images to cease out of Noph; and there shall be no more *a prince of the land of Egypt.*" Chap. 29, 30.

We remark, first, it was very unlikely, to human apprehension, that Egypt should be the lowest of kingdoms always. Of all the nations, it seemed most

unlikely that Egypt should be depressed very long, because her unparalleled fertility and consequent populousness promised a speedy recovery after a downfall. Shall that country which was so long, so universally, and so justly called the *granary* of the world, have any other than a dense population? And, if numerous, shall strength be wanting to recover her freedom? It was more improbable of Egypt than of any other spot of earth, that strangers should always rule and waste it, because of its situation. The Mediterranean on one side, the Red sea on another, impassable deserts on another, promise great defence. But the total inundation of the whole country by the Nile, during a part of every year—which the inhabitants are prepared to meet, while an invading army never can be—would surely aid even a weak people to defend themselves. But the Lord said her exaltation was ended, and that her future recovery was prohibited. The Babylonians, then the Persians, next the Macedonians, the Romans, the Saracens, the Mamelukes, and finally the Turks, have protracted her subjugation and her servitude down to the present day. She has often made the attempt, but never succeeded to free herself. She has been *under* and *always* under, *low* and always *low*. She has been kept the *basest* of kingdoms; servile, stupid, treacherous, cruel, and base in character. We know of no part of the earth which has not governed itself, or been free some part of the last twenty-four hundred years, except that part which, from its location, fertility, and internal resources, seemed most likely to continue independent all the

time. We do not know the otherwise considerable nation which has been thus debased for half that time, but the one seemingly most capable of self-defence.

Secondly, when Ezekiel lived, had we been there and about to invent a highly political or historic improbability, could we have thought of a greater one than to suppose that the idols and images should cease out of Egypt? What! shall we conjecture this of those who were so strangely prone to worship any thing but God? Serpents, unicorns, cattle, reptiles, no matter what it was, they kneeled before it.

It was a strange prediction to speak of causing images or idols to cease in a land where continued baseness is to prevail; because we spontaneously couple together in our minds ignorance, images, filth, idols, and sensuality.

Images have long ceased there. Their idols have long since been destroyed. The Christian—in name only—who lives there, and the Turk who rules there, equally disdain to kneel before wood or stone, living animals, or painted statues.

Thirdly, it was strikingly probable, from all former history, and from all historic analogy, that Egypt would, at some time, have a native ruler, even should that ruler hold a borrowed or deputed authority. May not one of her own sons sit a prince upon that throne, although he may be a tributary prince? May not her native lords govern there, no matter how exorbitant the tribute?

There has never been a prince of the land of Egypt. Their rulers have been sent to them. Stran-

gers have sent their slaves to be governors of the land of Egypt.

It has not been her own sons who, in the pride of self-exaltation, have drained the treasures of Egypt It has always been by the hands of strangers that she has been wasted.

Application. If we inquire of the unbelievers who live now—not merely of the uncultivated, but of the most noted for talents and professional eminence—whether they have not been surprised on reflecting that these things were said of *one* nation only; and that out of all the nations of the earth, of one *only* they have happened to be true, and that for so many generations, we find that they have never meditated on such points. Of these and of similar facts almost countless in extent, they know nothing, and they do not inquire; yet, either openly or in heart, they are scoffers. Men are slow and backward to inform themselves of any thing on the side of truth, in matters of religion; but slight and superficial objections, weak but plausible theories against the Bible, they learn speedily, they understand instantly, and they remember always. It is supposed, on good evidence, that no son of Adam ever was known to forget an ingenious and seemingly correct argument against Christianity, once heard, so long as he retained his mind.

The conclusion is, that men love *darkness* rather than *light*.

CHAPTER XII.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

We might here cease to point at Bible facts, hoping that even the few we have noticed might serve as samples from the mass; but we feel inclined to give another instance, to show that these facts abound all through the New Testament as well as the Old.

The Saviour's Prediction. "And when ye shall see Jerusalem *compassed with armies*, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh. Then let them which are in Judea flee to the mountains, and let them which are in the midst of it depart out; and let not them that are in the countries enter thereinto; for these be the days of vengeance. And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the *times* of *the Gentiles* shall be *fulfilled*." Luke 21:20–24.

Observe, first, the time the Redeemer fixed and left on record for his followers and children to depart from that devoted city, was the time when it must seem to them that they could not get out of her. How were they to escape after the invaders had surrounded them? The church in Jerusalem had increased sometimes as fast as several thousand in a day. How were these families to depart, when Jerusalem was compassed with armies? The sign named by the Saviour as the token of their flight was of itself an impassable barrier in the way of their travel. The incident which dictated their hasty

journey must necessarily hedge up their way. If the reader wishes a particular recital of many striking incidents, let him turn to the contemporary historian Josephus, who was himself an actor in the military occurrences of the time. This much admired and much respected writer does not seem to have known or to have remembered that the Saviour had said any thing of the Roman eagle standing where it ought not, or of Jerusalem being compassed with armies. When this siege did occur, he relates the circumstances truthfully, although it is evident he did not know that they were appointed of heaven. The banner which the soldiers worshipped, and which the prophet called the "abomination which maketh desolate," waved before the temple gates. Josephus relates accurately the movements of the Roman general Cestius, on that occasion. He informs us, that when he might have taken the city speedily, and with comparative ease, thus terminating the war at once, he led his army away. He retired "without any just occasion in the world." Josephus seems to want words to express his surprise at the conduct of this commander. Perhaps Cestius scarcely knew himself why he thus acted so much to the astonishment of beholders; but had we been there, knowing what we now know, we could have told all spectators and historians the reason why he withdrew. God's people were in that city. His little flock—little in comparison with the multitude of the ungodly—never noticed by the haughty of this world unless to deride or calumniate, are never forgotten by him. They were to seek safety in the mountains; they were to

have an opportunity to retire. To afford this, the Roman legions must be taken to a proper distance. They were thus conducted, and the followers of the Saviour with their families did retire. The young reader is here again reminded that we are not giving merely the Christian account of these things. He may gather these facts from the pens of ancient and modern unbelievers, if he prefers their testimony. When those who had vociferated, "Crucify him, crucify him; his blood be upon us and our children," were crucified themselves, with their children, around the walls of their blazing city, nailed many on the same cross, until there was no more space on which to plant a cross, and no more wood of which to make one; when famine, gnawing, unparalleled famine, was doing a work along those crowded streets, the bare recital of which would cause the stupid, the callous, or the cruel to faint with sickening horror, *there were no Christians there.* They had gone to Pella. They had watched for the Redeemer's token, and obeyed the signal. Those words spoken by the Man of Calvary, unheeded by the world then, unnoticed by after-generations, and that scoffers of the present age scarcely know are in the Bible, were the means of their salvation. Let the reader bear these incidents in mind, until we come to the application.

Observation second: "And Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles shall be fulfilled."

An inspired apostle, Paul, at the command of the Holy Ghost, had given the church to understand—shall we say fortunately or unfortunately—that this

fulness of the Gentiles was to synchronize with the conversion of the Jews at a glorious period in the latter days. The prophet Daniel, in the prediction quoted by our Lord, lets us know that the desolations of Jerusalem were to continue until the end of the struggle between Christ and antichrist. The Saviour himself, in other discourses, lets us know that these long desolations would not terminate until the *latter days.* What an opportunity to defeat the declarations of the Messiah, and to show that Jerusalem should not be trodden down of the Gentiles through after-ages. The Israelites have been rich enough to build a score of temples during any period of their widest dispersion, or of their deepest, heaviest oppression. Notwithstanding the reiterated massacres, the constant apostasies or lapses into heathenism, the uninterrupted commingling with their oppressors, etc., there has been no portion from any one of the eighteen centuries now gone by, during which there might not have been counted two millions or three—a number sufficient to populate the hills and vales of Canaan—and zealous enough to *venture* almost any thing, or to *endure* almost every thing for the Zion of their songs. If some king of the earth, some sceptred potentate would only sanction or countenance their return, what would they not perform? The Lord allowed them just such a man; nay, a more powerful leader: one who sat on Cesar's throne, who nodded and the nations trembled. The emperor Julian was an accomplished warrior. He ruled over the land shown to Abraham, and ten times as much. He hated the Saviour as bitterly

as those who crucified him. He had been educated under the sound of the gospel, and knew the words of Christ. He was familiar with the writings of the evangelists. He resolved that Jerusalem should be trodden under foot of the *Israelites*, instead of the Gentiles. The reader is invited to examine the account of this as given by one whose hatred of the gospel equalled that of Julian himself. The author of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire was under the necessity of stating some facts concerning this effort to defeat the words of Christ, made by the mighty and the wise. At the invitation of the emperor, the children of Judah assembled to rebuild their temple and to claim the inheritance of their fathers. Their enthusiasm was wonderful. Even their delicate females were seen carrying off rubbish in their silver veils. Their joyful companies labored, cheered on by the sound of instruments of music and animating voices. But the emperor did not trust this undertaking to the Israelites alone. Wealthy as they were, devoted as they were, he resolved to make this matter more certain still. He could aid by his proclamations, his royal decrees, or his treasures, but it was not a trifle he had at heart; to show the gazing earth that the Jewish worship *should* be restored, where the Lord had said the Gentiles should continue to tread, was no ordinary achievement. He went himself to their aid with those cohorts and those legions that had crossed rivers, hills, and deserts, that had elevated or dethroned monarchs, and before whom it was hard indeed to stand. Here then was to be a trial of the strength of heaven and the strength

of earth, in determined contest and fairly balanced opposition. Jews and Romans, Christians and heathens, gazed to see whether the emperor could or could not go contrary to the declaration uttered by the Man of sorrows, who had not where to lay his head. The earthly potentate was defeated. He abandoned the undertaking. This fact, recorded by Christians and by infidels, would be enough for our present purpose, were we to say nothing concerning the means of his defeat. To show that Jerusalem has been still trodden down of the Gentiles, is mainly the point we have in view; and it is all we shall notice when we come to the application. But for the purpose of exhibiting the way in which opposers uniformly narrate that which they dislike to pen—we must notice the strange want of fairness and of truth belonging to unbelieving historians, leading them sometimes to conceal and sometimes to pervert—we look for a moment at Gibbon's history of this event. He grants that it was said the workmen were driven from their work by a supernatural visitation; that they were scorched by fire again and again; that an account of this public and marvellous defeat was published the same year by two individuals—but these individuals were Christians. That their statement was neither denied by the emperor or his friends, nor contradicted in any way, does not seem to have weighed much in his estimate of the singular occurrence. It is true that Gibbon speaks well of a certain heathen writer, Ammianus Marcellinus, who was the emperor's private secretary, and who became his biographer. It is true he quotes the following

words of Ammianus, who knew as much of the defeat and the cause of it as did the emperor himself. "While Alypius, assisted by the governor of the province, urged with vigor and diligence the execution of the work, horrible balls of fire breaking out near the foundations, with frequent and reiterated attacks, rendered the place from time to time inaccessible to the scorched and blasted workmen; and the victorious element continuing in this manner absolutely and resolutely bent, as it were, to drive them to a distance, the undertaking was abandoned." If the historian had simply quoted this testimony, telling us that although this reputable heathen author was a spectator of these things, and was recording his own failure along with that of his master, still he, Gibbon, did not credit the recital, there would have been nothing unfair in the transaction; but his efforts to prejudge the case and bias the reader's mind against evidence, certainly evince a repugnance to the unobstructed ray of light. It is not our object here to inquire how much credulity they must possess who can believe that no one was found to contradict these statements of Pagans and Christians, out of all the Jewish nation, and out of all the Roman army, or from the ranks of the admirers or flatterers of royalty. A sermon which was preached within that generation is still extant, addressed to the Israelites as a persuasive, leading them to obey the gospel; they were reminded of this noted overthrow, and invited to go and look again at the materials and other tokens of their rebuke from heaven while endeavoring to go contrary to the purpose of the Maker of worlds. We

might pause and inquire how strange that any one wishing them to embrace Christianity, should remind them of that which they had never known, and speak to them of wonders which they had never witnessed, as though these marvels were fresh in their recollection; but these are not the points before us. The certainties alone are enough for our purpose. We know that Jerusalem has been trodden down of the Gentiles seventeen hundred years. We know that the Jewish worship was not restored; and that if a wealthy and enthusiastic people, aided by an emperor and his army, were not enough to build another temple, then nothing ever could accomplish it.

Application. Should the reader desire to ascertain whether those who scoff at holy writ do not occasionally have their curiosity, at least, awakened by such incidents as those above named, so far as to lead them on towards further inquiry, he may soon bring the matter to a fair trial by asking such questions as the author has often asked. Inquire the reason why the Christians left the city, and were not involved in ruin and misery such as the world had never seen before. Had they more political sagacity than their countrymen? Or why did not some fifty or a hundred thousand of the more prudent Jews retire to Pella, and share the safety which the Christians there enjoyed? Or, if the church had been watching for the token, and obeyed the signal of the Redeemer, did he only conjecture the sign, or was he Lord of armies? How did he know that the dispersion would continue, and that Jerusalem would never recover her Mosaic forms of worship? etc.

Those who make such inquiries of such as reject the gospel at the present day, find, with striking uniformity, that they do not remember, or they never knew accurately, what Christ had said of that people and that place. They are not informed as it regards Julian's ability, or his wish to disprove the prophecy; what unbelieving historians have acknowledged on these points; what were the sufferings of those who killed the prophets and stoned the apostles, or indeed of any other fact or facts of this kind. It is only some hearsay difficulty, some seeming contradiction, or some objection of their own against the book of inspiration, which seizes and retains their thoughts when the subject of inspiration is mentioned.

There is another branch of wilful ignorance which must not be passed by without notice, but at present we are otherwise employed.

Scoffers of the present day are unacquainted with all those facts of historic authority which have a secondary connection with the holy page; but for the present we must show what we mean by saying they are ignorant of Bible language.

CHAPTER XIII.

SCOFFERS OF THE LAST DAYS ARE WILFULLY IGNORANT OF BIBLE LANGUAGE.

An old man of Kentucky became rich and mocked at God. He became more and more bitter, just as fast and in proportion as his kind Saviour heaped the blessings, comforts, and luxuries of life around him. He took up the Bible and read the following passage, or one like it: "Bel boweth down, Nebo stoopeth, their idols were upon the beasts, and upon the cattle: your carriages were heavy loaden; they are a burden to the weary beast. They stoop, they bow down together; they could not deliver the burden, but themselves are gone into captivity." Isaiah 46: 1, 2.

"Here," exclaimed the old man, with more than anger depicted in his face, "here is the jargon which no one can understand, which I am required to believe; an unmeaning jargon."

Reader, notice what that old man might have known, if he had read one fiftieth part as much Bible history as he had read of political disputes in his newspapers. Notice what he might have felt, while reading those verses, had he been humble enough to seek after knowledge; had he even patiently conversed with such of the pious as wished to speak with him on the great concern. He might have noticed that in the sacred book, God, by the mouth of his

prophets, spoke in the past tense of future events—that which he determined should take place was as certain as that which had already transpired. The old man might have reflected, that when Isaiah spoke thus of Bel and Nebo, the kneeling millions prostrate before those idols pained the hearts of God's people. The desolations of Zion, the subjugation and dispersion of the worshippers of the true God, made his prophets mourn. How his servants would watch and wait to see the salvation of Israel, as connected with the fall of Bel and Nebo. That old man might have learned from common history, that those gold and silver images were broken down under the hammer, placed on mules and oxen, and while driving to distant Media, the cattle were oppressed with the wearisome load.

The friends of God *then*, and the church ever since, while reading that passage, are cheered with the recollection that the Lord of glory invariably performs his promises of succor and deliverance. Their souls are fed with the glorious fact, that as he did not forget to fulfil his words of promise then, so he never will in future. The enemies of God might be reminded, if they would receive instruction, of the awful truth that his holy denunciations will also be verified. The passage is of course unmeaning to those who know nothing; but shall God be answerable for the wilful ignorance of man? Those verses are full of comfort, sublimity, and heavenly glory to the pious who have sought after knowledge. The boasting worm who chooses to keep himself in utter ignorance. cannot of course understand this or any

other passage which pictures ancient occurrences, but the blindness is in his own dark mind.

It is in this way that the educated and the brilliant in other things have neglected every thing connected with God's book; they have inquired after knowledge anywhere or everywhere else, and much of the sacred volume has no meaning to them.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

A MOCKER who was admired for his strength of intellect, exclaimed, "What unmeaning nonsense!" after reading either the following passage or one like it: "They shall jostle one against another in the broad ways. He shall recount his worthies: they shall stumble in their walk; they shall make haste to the wall thereof, and the defence shall be prepared. The *gates of the rivers shall be opened, and the palace shall be dissolved.*" Nahum 2:4–6.

Suppose this scoffer had condescended to inquire. He might have read this chapter with tears of wonder and of joy.

Before the invention of cannon, the walls of Nineveh, so famous for their height and their width, were trusted in as impregnable by those proud enemies of Jehovah's people. Perhaps, to many of them, the *opening of the gates of the rivers* was as unintelligible as it is now to modern mockers; but the Lord taught them its import with fearful accuracy. Ancient history informs us that during the siege in after-days, there arose one inundation of the Tigris, unparalleled, as far as we can learn, in previous ages or in succeeding centuries. It swept down that boasted wall, on the top of which three chariots used to drive abreast, by furlongs. Through these awful gates the river entered and melted down

their palaces and their piles of bricks; showing to them and to us that God's word, however strange and unlikely, will always be fulfilled! If man keeps himself in such ignorance that he cannot understand or be profited by these glorious flashes of heavenly light, who will finally bear the shame, the book of light, or the uninformed mocker? You may spread a table of pure and wholesome food which the perverted appetite of the sated epicure will not receive; but his feelings of disgust do not change the existing nature of those really desirable viands. There is no passage, no fraction of a passage, within the covers of that blessed book, which is not rich with treasures of instructive truth, or full of music and of light; but it is an old fact, that men may close their eyes and stop their ears, until they cannot judge of or even perceive sight or sound.

CHAPTER XV

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

In how many instances every day does it happen, that the Bible is cast away with indignant scorn, after some one, wise in his own estimation, has read a sentence resembling that which follows: "Oh, that thou wouldest rend the heavens, that thou wouldest come down, that the mountains might flow down at thy presence, as when the melting fire burneth, the fire causeth the waters to boil, to make thy name known to thine adversaries, that the nations may tremble at thy presence!" Isaiah 64:1, 2.

If we were to address a scoffer who says, "I cannot understand this book," after reading such a page, we might make to him two several statements:

1. Fellow-worm, if you will place yourself at the foot of that volcanic precipice, at the time when the broad, deep, and dreadful torrent of melted ore flows down its side, while the boiling ocean retires before this red tributary; if you will gaze at the electric flash, and hear the subterranean thunder, you will confess, unless you have stupefied your soul with sin until you cannot feel, that no spectacle towards which mortal eye could be directed, is more calculated to awaken in us a recollection of the grandeur, the power, and the dreadfulness of the awful One.

2. If you never have, like the prophet, felt so

pained by the wickedness, the blasphemy, ingratitude, and daring insults of rebellious man, that you longed to see them overawed and stilled into obedience by some striking manifestation of Jehovah's power, it is because you have no piety, and never felt any genuine filial gratitude towards the giver of all the mercies which sustain you; but you should not scorn those who have.

Oh, every line of that inspired page is sweet, or reproving, or grand, or instructive, or cheering; but men love darkness rather than light, and the learned are too ignorant to understand the plainest words that ever were written, provided those words come from heaven!

CHAPTER XVI.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

"And the daughter of Zion is left as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers."

There was a man who had read Xenophon and Longinus, Cicero and the Latin poets. He was applauded by his friends for what they called his mind. The passage quoted above, and hundreds like it, he said appeared to him not only unmeaning, but weak, puerile, and inelegant. In process of time he was led by the notes of modern travellers, seemingly by accident, to remember that these little lodges are built for the habitation of a single watcher, to preserve from the ravages of birds, etc., those oriental gardens. We are told that if we sail on the bosom of that gentle river, and look to the slope where the quiet sunshine rests on those lonely and solitary dwellings during the stillness of evening, nothing on earth is more calculated to bring into the bosom a feeling of desertion and desolation, than this image from the prophet's pen, picturing the decay of Jerusalem.

This self-important man afterwards confessed that the deficiencies were in his own stupid soul, and that the language of the Bible was indeed the style of heaven.*

* Perhaps one confession ought to be made to the infidel world. It is, that Christians should not be too loud in their

CHAPTER XVII.

MEN HAVE LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT.

We have endeavored to hold up to view that strange tendency and natural leaning towards falsehood, in matters of religion, which we possess without being aware of it. We will endeavor to illustrate this same truth by another process. It should be presented in another attitude. We think the weakness of props on which opposers rest, gives a full exhibition of this truth. If men base a fabric of their eternal expectations on decayed weeds, while an enduring rock is close at hand, there is some strange reason for such a choice. There is something defective in his heart or in his head, who is content to cast away the book of God, and venture

voice of condemnation, so long as they practise the same sin which they reprove.

Christians believe that their heavenly Father has sent them a long, kind letter from heaven; that they owe it to him to read every line of it to their children, and make them acquainted with all interesting concomitant facts. For want of this knowledge, many of the youth of our nation have grown up scoffers. Rather than risk this, encounter any trouble and expense; better have a professor at college for every book in the Bible; better recite a morning lesson on every line in the book; better endanger the loss of all other knowledge. How is the actual practice of the church in these things? When the Christian parent places his son in the academy or college, does he say to the teacher, "Whatever else you may omit, see

all the terrors of the judgment-day upon some one feeble cavil, which is annihilated as soon as a few facts are presented.

Out of many we must select a few, and such as we have heard urged most frequently.

Case 1. An amiable lawyer, after urging his toilsome but successful course for many years, at last won a seat in Congress. On his way to the meeting of that assembly, he was taken with a disease which at first did not seem alarming. A physician, with whom he was on terms of intimacy, went to see him. This physician was one who thought the soul of great value. He believed the disease one of those which flatter but destroy. He felt impelled to tell his friend so, and to ask as to his preparation for crossing the river of death. The lawyer answered him that he could not believe in Christianity. The doctor asked if he had ever investigated the matter. He replied that he had read such and such books on the subject, naming over some five or six

that you teach him the ancient literature connected with the Bible?" No, this is not his charge, this is not his expectation. He knows that his son will be taught daily, laboriously, and invariably, Virgil, Horace, and other heathen authors, containing many most exceptionable passages. But if a college has a rule that the Bible is to be part of the course, it is an unpopular rule, and often the teachers are themselves ignorant of Bible facts and Bible language. The haters of God have exclaimed, "The college is no place to learn religion;" and this weak dogma Christians have obeyed scrupulously, and Bible facts and Bible language form no part of the nation's study. Books on these points—Lardner, Grotius, Shuckford, Prideaux, etc.—are almost out of print; they may be found in a preacher's library, but even there, will in many cases be sought in vain.

infidel authors, and that he deemed this a sufficient research. Being asked if he had never read any thing on the other side, he confessed he never had. His friend told him that he deemed this a strange investigation, but would wish to hear the argument of his strongest confidence, that on which his hope leaned with the most quiet security. His answer was substantially as follows: "I can never believe in the darkness said to prevail over the land at the crucifixion of Christ. The strange silence of all writers, except the evangelists, disproves the statement; the elder Pliny particularly, who devoted a *whole chapter* to the enumeration of eclipses and strange things, would surely have told us of this occurrence had it been true." His friend the physician answered him with the following facts:

"My dear friend, permit me to tell you where you obtained that statement concerning the silence of contemporary authors, and the chapter of Pliny devoted to eclipses. You read it in the second volume of Gibbon's Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. There would be some degree of force in the statement, were it not for one individual circumstance; that is, *it is not true!* A tree painted on paper may resemble an oak, but it is not an oak. There is not a word of truth in Mr. Gibbon's account, although the falsehood is polished. That which he calls a distinct chapter of Pliny devoted to eclipses, seems to have taken your full credence. Pliny has no such chapter; it is only a sentence, an incidental remark as it were. *It consists of eighteen words.* I will repeat them to you, if you wish to hear them. The im-

port of the remark is, that *eclipses are sometimes very long, like that after Cesar's death, when the sun was pale almost a year.* A man hears of many things which he does not write. Pliny does not mention the darkness, but Celsus does, and so do Thallus and Phlegon, Origen, Eusebius, Tertullian, and others, some of them Christians and some of them pagans." The reader can see Horne's Introduction, vol. 1, chap. 2. "I am sorry you took the word of that author, splendid as were his talents; for he sometimes penned falsehood without scruple, if religion was his topic."

The sick man was silent, and fell into a long deep revery. After a few days he said to a relative, "If what I read in youth gave my mind a wrong bias, I suppose I must abide the consequences, for I cannot investigate now." He fell into convulsions and died.

REFLECTIONS. Poor man! the truths of the gospel and the evidences of Christianity were presented to him, and he turned away. He read a statement against the Bible made by a modern historian who hated Christianity, and he received it at once without asking further. He took hold on a falsehood without one moment's delay or hesitation, relied upon it, and continued to believe it for twenty years, never asking after further testimony. Surely *men love darkness rather than light.* Ten thousand fruitful facts were before him and around him on the page of history—they favored Christianity, and he did not observe or remember them. The first historic lie he met *satisfied* him. It seemed opposed to revelation.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MEN HAVE LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT.

Case 2. Several physicians of Virginia declared to each other that the Bible could not be true, because the doctrine of the resurrection was taught there, and this they deemed impossible. They mentioned the case of a man whose body was carried in fragments to different parts of the earth; and asked, with exulting laughter, how he was to recover his body after it had been dissolved, mingled with earth, grown again into vegetables, then again forming a part of other animals and other bodies, age after age. Hundreds and thousands make this the strongest prop of their system of unbelief, but physicians are mentioned here because they are familiar with facts which would utterly forbid any one being influenced a moment by such reasoning, unless he had a strong appetite for falsehood and a full disrelish for the truth. That men of science have trusted in the hope that the resurrection could not take place, because part of the same body may have belonged to different men and different animals, exhibits so glaringly and undeniably the love for darkness, that we must take some time and some space to review the fabric of their confidence. We must encounter some toil and exercise some patience, to make that perfectly plain to the youthful or the unlettered, which is so readily understood by the anatomist. We must and will

expose, if we can, that which has led the scientific to propose a difficulty in the doctrine of the resurrection. Let enlightened readers then bear with us, while we explain things well known to them, for the sake of the uncultivated. The inferences will be of equal importance to all. The application is profitable to each one of us.

Let the following facts be noted and impressed on the memory.

First fact. God tells the righteous that their bodies, although made out of the materials belonging to their present frames of earth, will shine and be very splendid. 1 Cor. 15:40–49. God can make very durable and very glorious things, out of materials the very opposite of firmness or of brilliancy. He has done this. Of all the substances with which we are acquainted, we esteem diamond the hardest and the most glittering. Charcoal is as black and as crumbling as any other body known to us, yet these two bodies are the same. The learned know, the ploughboy does not, that the difference between charcoal and diamond is, that the Creator has ordered a *different arrangement of particles.* The same materials are differently placed, that is all. If any are wishing for a body more beautiful than they now have, they may be assured that God can, if he chooses, take our present fragile, corruptible forms of clay, and make out of them something exceedingly glorious. "It is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory." Out of a certain spot of earth a flower arose, which waved in splendor; the soil from which it grew was very black.

Second fact. God has not told us how much of our present body goes into the composition of the new, on the morning of the resurrection.

The figure used as an illustration by the inspired writer, to make his instructions plain on this subject, is the grain which is sown in the earth, decays, and out of which springs the new grain. It is perhaps a twentieth or thirtieth part of a grain of wheat, which springs up and forms a part of the new grain; the rest rots and stays in the ground. It is not needed in the new body which God gives the wheat, and is not called forth again. Whether it will be a tenth, a twentieth, or a hundredth part of our present body, which is to enter into the formation of the new, God has not chosen to tell us, and we need not care, for the work will be well done and we shall know enough after a time.

Third fact. The man who has lived here seventy years, has had very many bodies: perhaps less, perhaps more than seventy. God has not condescended to tell us out of which of these bodies he will take the new, or whether a portion of each will be used.

Here let the young reader be very careful to note and remember, the body he has now is not the same body he had last year. Our bodies change continually. The man who is kept from food in any way, no longer than one week, finds, at the end of that time, he has not as much body by many pounds, as he had seven days before. In this way, how fast the body wastes is not yet accurately agreed on. Our food is only supplying this continued waste. The

bones change also, but not so fast as the softer parts of our frames. How the body can waste, and be again renewed, is singular and interesting, but not easily understood without close thinking. It will be worth while to take some pains, and drop anatomical style, or physiological style, and speak in a way to be understood by all. The young reader may be led to admire the wonderful works of God, while preparing to comprehend a fact connected with his own resurrection. Every little boy knows what a vein is. He is also capable of understanding what is meant by a vein forking, or branching again and again, until it becomes exceedingly small, like those he has seen running over the eye when it is inflamed. Then again, he can fancy that if one of these small veins shall divide into a thousand branches, in running a short distance, they must become so small that they cannot be seen by the eye alone. And if thousands of these branch a thousand times, they will lay over each other finer and more plentifully than the hair of the head. These small veins physicians call vessels, bloodvessels. Running through, and along with these, are other vessels as small and as numerous, that are not called bloodvessels. If we place a small pebble in a leathern tube, and contract our fingers behind the pebble, we may push it from one end of the tube to the other. In this way, and through these countless millions of vessels, our food changed to blood is conducted to every part of the body where it is needed. We call that which is so much smaller than the dust of flour that we cannot see it, a particle. When any of the body which

we now have shall have remained long enough where it is, to become too old and need changing, it is taken up by particles into these hairlike vessels; the vessel contracts behind the particle and pushes it on the skin, and much of the body is lost in one day by what is called insensible perspiration. Others of these vessels lead in a different direction, and taking up particle after particle of the old body, it is thrown into the bowels, and so passes off. But from where these particles are taken there is left a vacancy of course, and if not supplied, the man is said to be falling away, or declining in flesh. Our food, day after day, is taken into the stomach, there prepared, taken up in particles by these small vessels, conducted to every part of the body, and deposited in these vacancies. Thus we think that any one can understand the necessity of daily food, and the wonderful process by which our sinking flesh is constantly sustained. But the inquiring mind sometimes demands, "If my body is thus totally changed, and so often, how is it that I look as I formerly did, or retain my shape in any way?" Answer: This you shall understand if you are willing to think industriously. Take a plate and cover it over with apples. On the top of this first layer of apples place a second, and on these a third, and so continue; after a time you will have a pyramid, and one to crown the top alone. Then suppose one man approaches the plate, takes up an apple and throws it to a distance. Another man by, immediately drops another apple as large into its place; your pyramid is still there, and retains its shape. The first man takes up apple after apple in

swift succession, casting them to a distance, while the second man drops an apple into each vacuum as fast as they are made: your plate of apples may be changed a thousand times, and the pyramid is still there in full shape. Thus your body is changed and renewed by particles. The shape remains, although there is nothing about you, soul excepted, which was there in former years. It is a man's immortal part which constitutes his real identity. Blessed be God, the soul does not waste, and glory to his name, the body does; thus leading us to remember our dependence on our heavenly Father.

Fourth fact. We never had a body, a part of which did not come from every corner of the world. The rice of which that man is partaking grew in Georgia or the East Indies. That waterfowl once swam on the surface of a northern lake. That sugar came from Jamaica, and that fish once floated on the Newfoundland shoals. Young reader, do you expect to live a few months longer? If you do, you must have in part a new body; and where is it to come from? It is probable that you will eat bread; but the wheat from which this is to be made is now growing in your father's field, or in that of a neighbor. How is the growth of this wheat to be continued? Plants are sustained and nourished much from the air that floats past them; it enters into the pores, the leaves drink it up, and it forms a part of their substance. But the air of the earth is always changing and streaming in torrents from one part of the earth to the other. This incessant motion is necessary to preserve its purity. The air which is

to sustain that grain on which you are to feed, is not *near* it now; it is on the other side of the earth. Vegetation is fed by the showers of heaven. Water forms a part of the wheat, an indispensable portion. But that water is not over the field now. The clouds come from a distance. The process of evaporation will proceed on the surface of distant oceans, if the atmosphere is made heavy with the showers that nourish that which is to nourish you. You never partook of any food, part of which had not been collected from distant lands and oceans all over the earth.

Application. Here is a man who is acquainted with all these facts. He knows that the body he is to have, if he lives, is now diffused and commingled through all the elements of earth, air, and water; but his belief is, that when he dies, if his body should go back into these elements, and be scattered abroad once more, God cannot collect it again.

Well might heaven mourn, earth be astonished, and hell rejoice. I never could have believed this, if I had not seen and heard it. That scientific man is fully aware that for the twentieth time he has had a body gathered from the corners of the world; but his prop for eternity is, that God cannot do this once more on the morning of the resurrection. The fabric of his everlasting expectations rests on the creed, or the hope, that the Creator, who has given this other man fifty new bodies, will fail in the fifty-first effort, should he endeavor out of all these bodies to gather one new frame.

If this system or religious creed is not the result of man's disrelish for truth, and his love for darkness, then is there no such thing as cause and result. My dear friends, I do not envy you your tower of refuge. Be not angry with me if I prefer the Rock of ages for my security when the world reels.

CHAPTER XIX.

MEN HAVE LOVED DARKNESS RATHER THAN LIGHT.

Case 3. A noted teacher of Latin who had read the Bible, and who had read many volumes of history, averred that he could not receive the New Testament: "For," said he, "the enemies of Christianity, pagan writers, would surely have noticed Christ and his apostles, or their writings, or their miracles it they had been performed."

This objection was the ground of his creed, the pillar of his confidence. It has been such to thousands, and continues so to be.

To show the strength of these objections, we will look at similar cavils in matters of common history. Suppose you were to meet an impetuous and loud-talking young man, who had taken up some strange dislike to the occurrences of the American revolution. With flashing eye and indignant action, he declares that he does not believe one half of the statements of our historians. One of his most prominent difficulties and strongest objections he presents in the following way: "I never can believe that Lord Cornwallis marched his forces through Virginia. This is Washington's native state, and he would certainly have opposed them had the enemy crossed its border. The British troops never could have been in Virginia; common-sense tells me so; because, had they appeared there, we are certain, from what we know of

the character of Washington, he would have interfered, he would have encountered them." Now, observe, the secret of this marvellous difficulty is simply this: Washington was a man disposed to meet the enemy speedily and unfailingly. Nothing prevents this objection against American history from possessing great strength, but one solitary circumstance, and that is this: he did encounter, surround, and capture them.

If a class of men should keep themselves in obstinate ignorance of the transactions at Little York, this cavil would to their minds possess great force; but when the whole truth is told, we think a half idiot would turn away from the objector with contempt. Thus, when the scoffer says he cannot believe the gospel, because he *deems it altogether probable and to be expected, that other writers besides the evangelists would have mentioned or alluded to the occurrences of those times*, it is indeed true that these attestations, records, or allusions were to be looked for; and all that prevents the argument having some weight is, simply, that these records and heathen testimonies were penned in the greatest abundance. The objector is not only ignorant of what was written in that age, but he continues perseveringly ignorant, as we are now about to show. Volney, Hume, Voltaire, and other able infidel authors, make statements on these points utterly untrue. These the scoffers read, believe instantly, and never forget; but answers written by friends of the gospel, they never read; or if they do, it is cursorily and languidly, and almost every statement is forgotten

before a month. All this the reader may observe for himself, if he be inclined. He may ascertain these facts from actual inquiry. He may test the matter whenever he chooses, by pursuing a course which in any degree resembles the following. Suppose he goes to that unbeliever, or to as many of them as he chooses, in any part of the earth, and after reminding him that the emperor Julian lived so near the apostles that his grandfather must have been contemporary with those who heard them preach; that this monarch was not only a splendid warrior, but an able writer, of extensive information; that in either writing or fighting against Christianity, such was his bitterness, that he put forth all his energies; and then proposes questions like the following: "What does this learned emperor state in his writings concerning Peter and Paul, whom he hated so bitterly?" "Had he any opportunity to learn whether or not the Saviour walked on the surface of the deep?" He confesses he did. "What does Julian record concerning the blind in the villages of Judea being restored to sight?" etc. Reader, you will find that the man who was professedly asking after heathen testimony, either never knew facts of this kind, or his recollection is so dim that out of volumes of them he cannot relate accurately three circumscribed items! Ask after the Greek philosopher at Athens, Aristides, who renounced heathenism,* who wrote a letter to the emperor, etc. Ask what this man said concerning those who had been healed or restored by the apostles in his day. Ask the objector, if this

* See Addison's Evidences.

philosopher's testimony is weakened because the evidences of Christianity were so strong as to cause him to renounce the religion of his fathers and be baptized. Ask the objector what Celsus wrote concerning the companions of Jesus—who lived, he states, a few years before his time. Ask what this writer states of the Saviour's incarnation—of his being born of a virgin—of his flight into Egypt—of his baptism, etc., and you will find that the man who turns away from the testimony of early *Christian* writers because they were friends of Christ, also keeps himself in ignorance of the remarks, or confessions, or quotations written by his *enemies*. Such a man of course must be destitute of evidence.

CHAPTER XX.

INCONSISTENCY OF UNBELIEVERS.

UNBELIEVERS demand heathen testimony concerning the book of the New Testament and the things contained therein; but the testimony of pagans and Jews on all such points they have forgotten, or they never knew.

Let those who can scarcely think this is so concerning the learned scoffer, go to him, or to as many as a thousand, severally, if so inclined, and ask, "What does Lucian say concerning the crucifixion of Christ; concerning the doctrine of love which he inculcated to his followers; concerning the honesty and fair dealing of his disciples, their hopes of immortality?" etc. You will find, that concerning the contents of the Talmuds, or Lucian, or Porphyry, Celsus, Tacitus, Pliny, Josephus, or any writer living near that age, they are almost entirely ignorant, or their recollections are only a mass of confusion.

We will notice another case, selecting it out of many, to show that those who ask for pagan testimony, wish indeed for no testimony on the subject. For the sake of the youthful or the unlettered, we preface the case with a few remarks relating to ancient history. The Romans were in the habit of writing, and preserving among their senate's records, striking events and strange occurrences. Their gov-

ernors used to send to the emperors a written account of noted and remarkable transactions, which were preserved under the name of these several governors, such as *the acts* of the principal men who ruled. Pilate sent on an account to the emperor Tiberius of the Saviour's life, miracles, crucifixion, resurrection, and ascension. These papers were called *Acta Pilati*, the acts of Pilate. Justin, who was a boy when St. John died, grew up in the Greek and heathen philosophy, was converted to Christianity about the forty-fourth year of his age, and wrote to Rome asking from Antoninus imperial favor and lenity for the Christians. Having written to the emperor and his senate of the life and death of our Lord, of the dead that were raised, of the diseases that were healed, etc., he adds, "And that *these things were done by him, you may know from the Acts made in the time of Pontius Pilate.*" Tertullian wrote to the emperor, and refers to the *Acts of Pilate.* The early Christians, in their disputes with the Gentiles, referred to the *Acts of Pilate* as authority which no one disputed. These writers, or these disciples, were almost uniformly either Jews or pagans before their conversion, and once hated the name of Christ.

Reader, go and ask the objectors of whom we have been writing, questions such as these: "Was the account of the Acts of Pilate, mentioned in the letters of Justin Martyr, less clear and credible because he renounced his former faith and embraced Christianity? Would Justin or Tertullian, or any other, writing to the emperor and senate, asking for

their lives and the lives of brethren, and for kindness, favor, and toleration to all the church, refer them to papers which they did not possess, or to senatorial documents that did not exist?" You will find that the objectors do not know who Justin, Tertullian, Irenæus, Clement, and Eusebius were; where, or when they lived; whether any of their writings are, or are not extant, or what they wrote about.

CHAPTER XXI.

UNCEASING CAUSE OF INFIDELITY.

Suppose there burns a light of uncommon splendor, not far from a man who hates its radiance. Suppose it is his duty to gaze upon its glory, but he refuses; this aversion may discover itself in a variety of attitudes, all tending to the one result. In the first place, he will not approach. Then, suppose an angel should descend, take him by the arm, and with the mastery of superior strength lead him near; will the object be accomplished? No; one of his expedients is taken from him, but he can employ another. He turns away his head. He is next compelled to face the light, but he holds his hand before his face; this forcibly is withdrawn, and he then shuts his eyes. Just so it has been with fallen man, in different ages, regarding the truth.

"If I had been near to Sinai, in the days of Moses and of Joshua," said a young man; "if I had stood at the foot of that thunder-rocked mountain, and heard the voice of God speaking to that nation, I never should have doubted the power of Jehovah; if I had marched through the bosom of that retiring sea, and had been fed with manna, year after year, I never should have questioned the deity of my leader for a single moment."

Neither did the Israelites; this was not the form of their unbelief. Amidst all their rebellions, they

never questioned the strength of Jehovah, or the facts recorded during their journey, a single hour. Their disrelish for the truth showed itself in the following way: "May not different deities have the empire of the earth divided between them? We know that our God is powerful; but our neighbors say that their god is also powerful. May it not be well to seek the favor of both? Might it not be wise to propitiate the favor of all? Their worship is easily rendered; it is very agreeable, and allows of the dance and songs and joyous festivity." The unbelief of this age was the infidelity of *idolatry*. It is true that the Lord sent them teacher after teacher; he chastised them, and warned them; he continued his marvels, multiplying their opportunities, adding to their prophets and instructors, until idolatry became as impracticable in that nation as it would be now in the streets of Philadelphia.

If some great man was to set up a gold or silver image in the street of one of our large cities, what is the reason he could not get the multitude to kneel before it? Is it because of any love they have for the Bible, or any reverence for the name of Christ, or the precepts of his will? No; there are thousands there as wicked, as sensual, and as filthy, almost, as the imagination can paint. There is no danger that the wicked of our land will fall into this kind of idolatry. They cannot. That road has been blocked up. Books, education, truth, science, and heavenly light have been brought too near. So it was when the Redeemer stood in the streets of Jerusalem. There was no fear that men would erect

wood and stone and kneel before it, as their fathers did. God had removed such hiding-places. Will they then receive the truth? Shall we now see them listen and obey? No; they then say, "He casteth out devils through Beelzebub, prince of devils." This was the form infidelity then assumed. The heathen caught the same excuse and used it. They all quieted their fears in this way. The writers of the Talmuds knew well enough the events of their day. They were sufficiently acquainted with what the Saviour did and suffered. How is it, then, that they did not become his disciples? How could they avoid submitting to the truth? They say he had learned the correct pronunciation of the ineffable name of God. They say he stole this out of the temple Again, they say he was in Egypt, where he learned the magic art, and practised it with greater success than any one ever did before him. See Horne's Introduction, vol. 1. They agree that he was the son of Mary, the daughter of Eli—was crucified on the evening of the passover—that the witnesses who swore against him were suborned, etc.

"Celsus, one of the bitterest antagonists of Christianity, who wrote in the latter part of the second century, speaks of the founder of the Christian religion as having lived but a very few years before his time, and mentions the principal facts of the gospel history relative to Jesus Christ—declaring that he had copied the account from the writings of the evangelists He quotes these books, as we have already remarked, and makes extracts from them as being composed by the disciples and companions of Jesus, and

under the names which they now bear. He takes notice particularly of his incarnation; his being born of a virgin; his being worshipped by the magi; his flight into Egypt, and the slaughter of the infants. He speaks of Christ's baptism by John, of the descent of the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove, and of the voice from heaven declaring him to be the Son of God; of his being accounted a prophet by his disciples; of his foretelling who should betray him, as well as the circumstances of his death and resurrection. He allows that Christ was considered a divine person by his disciples, who worshipped him; and notices all the circumstances attending the crucifixion of Christ, and his appearing to his disciples afterwards. He frequently alludes to the Holy Spirit, mentions God under the title of the Most High, and speaks collectively of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He acknowledges the miracles wrought by Jesus Christ, by which he engaged great multitudes to adhere to him as the Messiah. That these miracles were really performed he never disputes or denies, but ascribes them to the magic art, which, he says, Christ learned in Egypt." Horne's Introduction, vol. 1.

Now the Jewish and the Pagan writers, who knew what was done by Christ and his apostles for the space of forty years, were not under the necessity of becoming Christians. Men do not thus love the truth. The Jews and heathens who lived afterwards, with those who were raised from the dead, and with the children of those who were raised from the dead, declared, that although these things were

done, they would not believe. Rather than submit to the truth, they would attribute all to the agency of evil spirits. We know where our parents and our grandparents lived. We know many things about them which we never saw. Thousands who heard their parents and their grandparents speak of those who had been restored to sight, or of the children of those who were thus restored, of their intimacy with them, etc., had as clear a knowledge of these facts, as we have that our fathers landed on the rock at Plymouth, or were victorious at Bunker Hill; yet they would not obey the gospel. The magic art was their refuge. They did not, and they could not destroy themselves in that age by the unbelief of idolatry. This avenue to ruin was barred; but to ascribe the works of God to demoniac influence the genius of the age permitted, and this was their resort.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

Shall men continue, age after age, to destroy themselves by the persuasion, or by the hope, that the Lord and his apostles acted through *the agency of evil spirits?* No; that kind of infidelity cannot last always. As sure as the copies of that New Testament are multiplied, or much read in the churches, men will cease to attribute works of love and mercy to Satan. Preach that gospel extensively, and men will not believe in this creed of magic more readily than they now do. You cannot prevail on the most wicked, or the most ignorant blasphemer in any of our streets, to believe that Christ healed those who touched his garments, with the aid of fallen spirits. What is the reason that his enemies of the present day never think of accusing him of any connection with Beelzebub? It is not because of any affection they have for him; it is not because of their love, or their reverence, that they do not believe and cannot believe he learned the magic art in Egypt, where he certainly was in early childhood. No; the lamp of knowledge has been held too near to them. No thanks to the wicked *now*, that the Lord has made that kind of infidelity inconsistent with the genius of the age: there is enough of hatred to Christ and his precepts; enough of wickedness, ignorance, and pollution, to insure the rejection of offered mercy. His grace will be scorned, and his Messiahship denied.

but not under the old pretext. New expedients will be devised, and other channels sought. Any thing rather than look at the light. Centuries have rolled away. The original witnesses have fallen asleep, and their children, and their children's children, for many generations. During the first three hundred years and more, after our Saviour's ascension, had any one attempted to deny facts of the gospel history, some would have looked him in the face with the remark, "My father or my grandfather saw it, or conversed with a man who saw it." Ages have passed away. The latter days are here. An inspired apostle was directed to announce, that in after-days there *should come scoffers*, mocking at the promise of his coming, and casting away the whole record. We have noticed three of the most prominent and conspicuous kinds of infidelity, or of the forms in which unbelief has exhibited itself. Other intervening kinds have existed, such as the infidelity of superstition, priestcraft, etc., but we have not time and space to write minutely of its every shape. The infidelity of the last day is here. The scoffing unbelief, as foretold, is come; and it was to be accompanied with wilful ignorance, the offspring of a secret love for darkness. We must continue to observe other indications of this strange disrelish for truth, and we search after it more faithfully, because those who possess it are unconscious of its existence. This preference for darkness may be detected from the fact, that men in support of their own systems of infidelity are more credulous than ordinary, and believe that which is much harder to believe than simply to receive the truth.

CHAPTER XXIII.

INCONSISTENCY AND CREDULITY OF THE REJECTERS OF THE GOSPEL.

Rejecters of the gospel are exceedingly credulous, and in support of a false system, receive that which is harder to believe than the truth.

Case of a Schoolmaster. An aged man, who had spent much of his time in teaching a Latin school, had read at times fractions of history, until he had become somewhat acquainted with a few of the facts we have named. This knowledge seemed to detract somewhat from that quietude which he had once possessed in scorning holy things. His restlessness evinced itself occasionally by his impatience and fretfulness under preaching; but he thought himself entirely tranquil, and hated the word *Christianity*. It so happened, that from his intercourse with his books and with his acquaintances, he learned something of the *moral character* of the early *Christians*.

We will pause here long enough to inform the young reader how he may get the same knowledge, if he wishes it. As to what kind of persons they were who were baptized in the apostolic age, it is not hard to get an idea, because he may gather the account from friends and enemies. If we hear the character of a noted individual from those who *love* him, and are not entirely satisfied, we may ask further. Should

we receive the same account from a number of those who cordially *hate* him, we feel that this is all the testimony we could have on such a point. It is now, for the point before us, necessary that we should have some correct estimate of what kind of men and women those were who have been called primitive Christians. It may be that if I should refer the reader to the Acts of the Apostles, to the writings, or extracts from the writings, of Clement, Irenæus, Justin, Barnabas, Polycarp, and others, there are some who might inquire after other evidence, saying, that although these had been either Jews or Pagans, yet they were Christians at the time they wrote; and who knows but their partialities blinded them, or induced them to say things of their brethren more favorable than were deserved? If so, then the reader can seek elsewhere for testimony. Let him take the word of those who hated them and put them to the torture. We may gather from the brief remarks of Pagan adversaries the same facts, more circumstantially related by friends to Christ. For example, if we consult the celebrated letter of the younger Pliny to the emperor Trajan, we shall find his statement sufficiently decisive. This Pliny became governor of Pontus and Bithynia not far from the time of St. John's death, but he had been in public life elsewhere long before. Pliny informs the emperor that he sometimes made the Christians confess under the torture. Two young females thus tried he mentions particularly. He speaks of threatening with death, and ordering away to punishment for their *inflexible obstinacy*, until we begin to wish for the

confession of those who were tortured. We begin to desire an account of their character and their actions thus obtained. Reader, if you will consult the narrative given by Pliny, you will find that the Christians were brought to confess,

1. That they were wont to meet together on a stated day, before it was light, and sing among themselves alternately a hymn to Christ, as God;

2. And bind themselves by an oath—the word sacrament meant oath in the Roman tongue—not to the commission of any wickedness;

3. And not to be guilty of theft;

4. Not to be guilty of robbery;

5. Not to be guilty of adultery;

6. Never to falsify their word;

7. Nor to deny a pledge committed to them when called upon to return it.

The dullest reader, we suppose, has mind enough to see that if it is an *enemy's* testimony, collected from tortures and laborious research, that the aggregate of their criminal practices amounted to the following, namely, repeated and solemn engagements never to speak falsely, to act dishonestly, or to commit any manner of wickedness, etc., it is certainly praise as loud as though a friend had written that they were honest and upright in their ways.

Once more, we may gather from the writings of a hearty adversary just the same. Lucian was born a few years after the death of the oldest apostle.

"Lucian, the contemporary of Celsus, was a bitter enemy of the Christians. In his account of the death of the philosopher Peregrinus, he bears authen

tic testimony to the principal facts and principles of Christianity: that its founder was crucified in Palestine, and worshipped by the Christians, who entertained peculiarly strong hopes of immortal life, and great contempt for this world and its enjoyments; and that they courageously endured many afflictions on account of their principles, and sometimes surrendered themselves to sufferings.

"Honesty and probity prevailed so much among them that they trusted each other without security. Their Master had earnestly recommended to all his followers mutual love, by which also they were much distinguished. In his piece entitled Alexander or Pseudomantis, he says that they were well known in the world by the name of Christians; that they were at that time numerous in Pontus, Paphlagonia, and the neighboring countries; and finally, that they were formidable to cheats and impostors." Horne's Introduction, vol. 1.

These statements from the haters of the gospel would be amply sufficient, if no one else had written, to furnish us with all the information we need concerning the meekness and integrity of the early disciples. Go and collect and condense that which has been written by friends and enemies until you are satisfied; then come and follow on with us to notice what they must believe who cast away the Bible.

Before we proceed, however, we have still another preparatory remark or two to make. As it regards the number of the early Christians, any one who chooses may inform himself in the same way we have mentioned. For instance, if I read the pagan

historian Tacitus, concerning the persecution at Rome during which St. Paul was put to death, and find him calling those who were burned *ingens multitudo*, a vast crowd, I have testimony concerning the church in that city. For if those martyred were *ingens multitudo*, then it is no tortured inference to suppose the congregations from which they were taken, considerably numerous. Again, if we read from Pliny that the heathen temples had been almost deserted; that this *superstition*, as he calls it, had seized, not cities only, but the lesser towns and open country, we may make some inference regarding the number and strength of Christian congregations there and then. The same information may be had from other authors, either friends or foes, or both; but at present we must proceed with our narrative.

We have said that the aged school-teacher had picked up some information concerning the Augustan age and the times which followed it. He had a particular friend with whom he was willing at times to converse on the subject of religion without growing angry, but not long at once. This friend made to the old man a certain statement, and asked his belief on several different points. The following is as near the substance of that statement, and of those inquiries, as recollection will restore.

"My friend, I am about to ask you to draw a picture, then to look at it, and to meditate on it calmly for a few minutes. I am not about to ask you to describe, and then observe, all the churches and congregations of the Roman empire in the time of Nero or of Trajan. I will only ask you to notice

closely for a time one or two hundred churches, or Christian assemblies: these you may select wherever you choose; from Greece, Asia Minor, or from Africa, or collect some from every portion of the mass. No matter, only fix your eye on one or two hundred of these congregations. Let them be neither the larger nor the smaller, but churches of the medium size. You know that as it is now, so it was then, these congregations were not composed of any one class of society alone, but some were seen of every description in each assembly. Some were poor, some were not; some ignorant, some learned. Variety has been found in every Christian assembly throughout the earth, in every age. I do not ask you to observe these congregations through all the time that Christ and his apostles were on earth, or as long as miracles continued to be performed in the churches; but fix your eye upon them during just thirty years of that time. Enter now with me into one of them—we may say the church at Corinth—here is a congregation of, say one or two hundred members; some of them ignorant, others well informed; male and female, young and old. They were once all Jews or pagans, and very zealous for the religion of their ancestors. Now they are professed Christians, although it is dangerous to wear that name, both to property and to life. These Christians say that some of their number were once blind; but that they received their sight by virtue of the name of Jesus Christ, which was called over them. These Christians are altered in their conduct very much. They were, while pagans, very fond of theatres, feasts, and revels;

they were very sensual. Now, whether sincere or not, according to the statement of both friends and enemies their external conduct at least is very different. They are very careful to exhort each other every Sabbath, and to pledge themselves to each other continually, to abstain from all that is false or wicked. They seem to believe that Sabbath after Sabbath certain wonders are performed by themselves and brethren in the name of Christ.

"They think that they understand and speak the languages of the nations and people around them. The apostles are writing to them month after month, and year after year, not to be lifted up or exalted because they have the gift of healing, etc., because pride is unlovely in the view of Heaven. The members of this congregation seem to think that they converse continually about the wonderful works of God with their neighbors, in all their different tongues—Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and dwellers in Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Lybia and Cyrene; Cretes and Arabians, Jews and proselytes.

"Let us now enter into another congregation, and look round for a time, and then another and another, and so continue until we have reached just one hundred, in some five or six of the nations nearest Palestine. Now let us observe them closely for the first *five* years only, out of the thirty. Do you suppose that these congregations were deceived, thinking all the time that they spoke with tongues when they really did not? Do you suppose that these hundred churches, for the space of five years, did think that they saw

the blind cured, the dead raised, and then lived with them afterwards, while all the time it was mere delusion?"

The old man allowed that to take one hundred congregations out of any one nation of the Roman empire, and these congregations made up of members of every sect, temperament, class, and condition of mind and of body, and set their enemies to watch, to hate, and to kill them for their faith; and it would be *hard to believe* that they all thought these things done, when they were not done, by themselves, even for the space of fifteen years, instead of thirty. That one hundred churches should all happen at the same time to be thus deceived in matters of eyesight, for fifteen years, he thought would be *hard to believe;* and we agree with him.

He was also reminded of a piece of information, which the reader may obtain whenever he chooses We have at present a need for a distinct view of the fact. It is concerning the meekness and *patience under suffering* which belonged to Christians, and which nothing could shake. The reader, who may not wish to take the account of the church on this point, can have the testimony of enemies whenever he chooses, and wherever he turns. We will cite but one example, and that is from the page of the celebrated Pliny, which is already before us. Note his words: "I have put the question to them, whether they were Christians. Upon their confessing to me that they were, I repeated the question a second and a third time, threatening also to punish them with death; such as still persisted, I ordered away to be

punished, for it was no doubt with me, whatever might be the nature of their opinion, that contumacy and *inflexible obstinacy* ought to be punished." Others who were accused "denied that they were Christians, or had ever been so; who repeated after me an invocation of the gods, and with wine and frankincense made supplication to your image, which for that purpose I had caused to be brought and set before them, together with the statues of the deities. Moreover, they reviled the name of Christ; *none of which things*, as is said, they who are really Christians can by any means be compelled to do. These, therefore, I thought proper to discharge."

From the pen of this pagan ruler, the reader may gather all the praise which has ever been bestowed by friends. It is not hard to see to what he alludes in the words inflexible obstinacy; and when he informs us that there were certain things which they could not by any means be compelled to do, he has told us all the fortitude and faithfulness we were asking after. Reader, become acquainted with similar declarations and other scraps or detached passages from different heathen writers, and you will not demand information from Christian authors.

The unbeliever had pronounced it hard of belief, that many congregations in the circumstances named, for many years at a time, should think themselves capable, by using the name of Christ, of curing lepers, the blind and lame, unless it were so.

To think that they lived long with those who had once been dead, and were in habits of intimacy with

those who were born blind; and to think that they remembered the Sabbath, and the hour when they saw them restored—he thought that these delusions were not *likely* to happen in many congregations at the same time, or to continue very long, particularly if all the profit to each member was the loss of goods and worldly honor and life! He was reminded by his friend, that his difficulty would be somewhat increased after taking into account the fact, that those who sustain insult meekly and suffering uncomplainingly, with a quiet fortitude immovable and deathless, are not the characters easily led into any vain delusion.

It would be no harder to believe that a leper was cleansed, or a blind man made to see, at the command of the Creator, than to believe that ten thousand eyes belonging to such characters as we have named, were deceived in supposing that they saw incurable diseases healed, in many instances and through many years, when it was not so! It would be to believe in a miracle indeed, one hard of belief, to suppose that in very many different and distant nations at the same time, in open day and public streets, in cities, towns, and villages without number ten thousand eyes were deceived in thinking they saw, ten thousand ears in fancying they heard, and ten thousand hands in supposing they handled, those who had been dead or dumb, lame or afflicted with all manner of diseases, healed and restored.

Again, this aged unbeliever was asked, if it was easy to believe that these churches had all united to deceive; that they were not deluded themselves,

but had entered into a combination to delude others. His friend observed that he seemed somewhat perplexed. He remembered that it was the testimony of their enemies that they were formidable to cheats and impostors. He remembered, that according to Pagan authors, it was a noted part of Christian character to be often in the habit to renew their solemn pledges never to cheat, lie, or deceive. He confessed it was hard to believe that the pure and meek and firm, kind and inflexible, who would lose life at any moment rather than deny their word, all of which peculiarities their different enemies avow of them, should be the actors in such a scene of deception. Any limb of his creed, any part of his system, when taken and followed out, he would agree was *hard to believe;* but that our kind Creator should have pitied our condition, should have descended to instruct and to die for us, and should then offer us a heaven of purity where he himself resides, was what that aged immortal never would believe.

It is true, that the wilfully ignorant, who do not know what either friends or enemies said of the character of early Christians, are incapable of understanding any arguments on such points. Nevertheless, it is a fact, that the sceptical, who have partially informed themselves—we say *partially*, for we never knew one who had industriously informed himself—will swallow the greatest *absurdities;* they will take down the *wildest incredibilities* on the side of darkness, rather than believe any one plain, simple gospel fact, as related in the New Testament. And of

all men on earth, unbelievers have to be the most *credulous.* They dare not carry out their creeds into particulars. Their doctrines wound and destroy each other to such an extent, that they do not venture to state them clearly, but let it pass, saying, "I do not know how it is."

CHAPTER XXIV.

MEN WHO CAST AWAY THE BIBLE, ARE CREDULOUS IN THE EXTREME.

CASE OF A MORALIST. There was a man who scorned Christianity, but was at the same time a great advocate for orderly behavior. He seemed to rely much upon his honesty in dealing: he defrauded no man. His friend said to him, "Let me ask you, what do you believe? You must believe something. You say that you believe that God has made us, and placed us here. Thus far I agree with you, for here we are. The world he has made for our abode is one of considerable size, and well made. Our bodies are strangely made. We are curiosities to ourselves. We feel at times a strong inclination to know if our spirits are to die with our bodies, or if they are to live on. It would not have been very hard for our Maker to have given us some information on this, and on similar points, if he had chosen to communicate with us. I should love to know how long I am to exist. I should love to know what my Maker likes and what he dislikes; what he approves and what he hates. He must be a being of preferences. Intellectual beings always have choice. Some conduct must please, and the opposite of it displease him. I should have been glad to know some of these things, had he been able to inform me. Has he placed me here a wonder to myself, to guess at his

will; or has he told me something of my origin, how long since man was made, what he expects or wishes from him, and what is to be his future fortune? Is my Creator amusing himself at my perplexities, or has he left some guide by which I may find out all necessary knowledge?" The moralist allowed that our heavenly Father had not left us in the dark, unkindly or neglectfully. He said that reason was to be our instructor. He was loud and eloquent in praise of that *celestial lamp*, as he called it, which was to show the path of duty to every man. He said he had no use for the Bible, but reason directed him in every strait. His friend replied to him, in substance, as follows: "My dear sir, all your system of rectitude, etc., so far as it is worth any thing, you have stolen from the Bible. You are like the man who had taken up some strange hatred to the orb of day. He turned his back upon the sun and exclaimed, *I have no use for your light;* I can see without your beams. My Creator has given me eyes for that purpose, and I use them, and see all around me without looking at you. He thought that because his eye was never directed towards the sun, therefore he did not use his light. But he was using light which had been reflected and thrown in a thousand different directions. So because you never read the Bible, you hope you are not using its contents. All you have, and all you know which is valuable, you obtained from thence, or from those who received it thence for you."

This position we will prove, and then show what the moralist has to believe who thinks differently.

If you will take the map of the world and a pencil, then sit down and draw a black line around that portion of the earth where the Bible has been in the longest and most plentiful circulation, where every class, high and low, are able to read, and do read the volume most commonly and with most ease, such as England, Scotland, and the United States of America, *there* you will find men most enlightened and most amiable in demeanor. There, wherever are most Bibles, men are less cruel, less polluted, and less unprincipled. There they are less inclined to kneel before images of wood and stone, and more ready to understand and to practise the law of forgiveness and of love. Then sit down and draw a line around those countries where there are no Bibles, where none have been for generations, and there you will find most cruelty, most pollution, most absurd notions of Deity, and most darkness. Finally, mark off those sections of earth where that book has a partial circulation, as in Catholic countries, where it is read by a portion of the people, and with a medium frequency only, and there you will find a twilight in every thing.

The moralist is either afraid to look long at or to follow out such facts, or he says, "It happened so." He believes in casualty to an almost unlimited extent. The reader shall have an opportunity, if so inclined, to observe a portion of this credulity. It shall be exhibited in the words addressed to the moralist we have named, by his friend, or in words of similar import.

"Dear sir, you believe that human sacrifices are cruel, and cannot please God. You believe that

drunken revels, or lascivious rites, cannot be acceptable worship in his sight. You do not think that self-torture pleases him, and you have no doubt but that he looks with disapprobation upon adultery, theft, lying, or murder. You think that acts of kindness, of mercy, and of love, are pleasing to our Maker. This, you think, your reason tells you of his character. Now observe, if *reason* taught you all this, then reason has done the same for the multitudes of the most ignorant, and the most besotted in all Christian lands. Mark well, I deny that *reason* was your instructor, but it is true that something has thus instructed men wherever the Bible is. Even those wno cannot read it, know more truth about God than does the Mandarin of China. You could not in any way prevail on the most stupid creature you meet in our streets, to fall down before a block of wood and worship, believing it to be God. You may go to one hundred thousand of the most uninformed in Protestant countries, one after another, just as you meet them, and you will not find an individual who believes, or can be made to believe, that he can please God by killing his child, or by boring through his own tongue, or by drunkenness, or obscene rites, or revels. If reason has taught these unlettered, ignorant creatures so much truth, then it has taught them very uniformly; and they all know much of what is right and what is wrong, in all moral deportment. But will you just reverse the picture? Just look at the other side for a moment. Come with me across the ocean. Here is a populous nation. They have some science, they cultivate astronomy, and there is

a class which may be denominated the learned. But the Bible has not been in use there for a thousand years. Go to one hundred thousand of the first you meet, one after another, learned or unlearned, and talk with them. If reason should have told them some truth about God, it has not done it—not one out of that whole nation who does not either believe that to strangle that infant would please God, or he believes obscene revelry to be a part of worship; or he will talk of the intrigues of his gods, or in some way show that he looks upon them as gigantic in wickedness. The most learned there believe in human sacrifices, or sensual rites, or absurd enormities, such as would excite the pity and the ridicule of the poorest and the lowest in our land. How is it that reason does not chance to teach where the Bible is not? Glance your eye entirely across heathenism. If the Maker of worlds intended reason to teach men there some just notions concerning himself, it has failed in six hundred millions of instances in this generation, and in as many during the last generation, and as many the generation before that, and so on. If he expected that reason would tell men there only a few truths respecting his own character, what would please him, etc., he has been disappointed, or he has furnished an insufficient guide, for it has not succeeded in a single instance. If the wicked in the land of Bibles would do only what the Bible has taught them, they would need no more. That book has succeeded in teaching until they know how they should act. The most degraded and the most ignorant there know more of the proper worship of God, and of his proper charac-

ter, according to the character given of God by the deist, than does the most learned and the most exalted in heathen lands."

Now we are ready to look at what the worshipper of reason has to receive in his creed. In the United States of America, or in England, there are some twenty millions of the human race, each one of whom knows much of the proper character of God; much of what is lovely, and what is in itself hateful. Each one does know, with considerable correctness, that which would please God, and that which he must abhor. Here is a man who says, "Reason has taught them this." If so, it has not failed in a single instance. It has happened to be uniform in many millions of cases: surely we might suppose, that if reason is so sufficient that it has not failed in one out of twenty millions of cases, then leave it to itself in twenty millions more, and it will succeed in half of them. No; it has not in one. In Asia and Africa you may count two hundred millions of persons now alive whose reason has been at work for twenty years, and out of the whole two hundred millions, there is not one who does not either believe that the favor of the gods may be purchased by self-torture or human sacrifice; that sensuality is pleasing to them, or that they are opposed to each other, and may be courted in different ways; or other sentiments equally absurd and grovelling.

So it has been in past generations. Those ancient Greeks had great statesmen, orators, and poets. Succeeding ages have gazed at them: they believed that to place that only son, that promising boy on an altar,

and whip him until his entrails could be seen through the quivering flesh, would please Diana. Are you admiring the wealth, or the polish and the splendor of the Carthagenians? They believed *sincerely*—so sincerely that they would perform it—that it would please God if one or two hundred of their children at a time were cast into that redhot metallic statue. Just such things were believed by Romans, Medes, Elamites, and all people where that singular old book did not circulate. Reader, if you believe that reason always did teach to avoid these cruel enormities where the Bible was found, but never did happen to instruct better where that page was not, then we have no further argument with you at present. If you believe that the low, and unlettered, and most ignorant in Bible regions—who have more correct ideas of God, and of justice, and of loveliness, than have the most scientific in pagan countries—have been thus instructed by *reason*, then will we cease all further discussion of that particular point with you.

CHAPTER XXV.

MEN ADOPT FALSE OPINIONS WITHOUT INQUIRY.

A MINISTER once delivered a discourse on the evidences of Christianity, in the city of New York. After the sermon was ended, and the audience dismissed, he descended from the pulpit, and was met by an intelligent looking man, well clad, whose eye flashed, and whose voice trembled with emotion. He seemed angry at the cause which had been advocated, and at the man who had spoken. He avowed, with indignant emphasis, that he had no doubt the Israelites had obtained their religion from the Greeks, and particularly from the philosophy of Plato. The minister replied, "Your argument would be worthy of some consideration, were it not for one circumstance, which certainly abates its momentum. You say that what the Israelites knew of God, they learned of Plato; but Plato says, that what he, and the Greeks in general, knew of the gods, they learned of the Israelites." The ancient Greeks called the Jews Syrians, because they lived in the land of Syria, and because they called themselves thus. Every male of the Jews was ordered to stand, on a given day in each year, and avow his origin by pronouncing publicly, and with a loud voice, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father." The word *fables* was the epithet by which the ancient Greeks designated all narratives. Plato informs us—see Stackhouse's His-

tory of the Bible—that one of the Syrian narratives from which his countrymen obtained their knowledge, was the *Fraternity* of the human family, and that man was made out of the dust. Whoever will read ancient history, and notice the Greeks during their nocturnal mysteries, where youthful virgins, having baskets full of flowers with serpents in them, call on the name of our first mother, Eva, Eva, all night, will not be at a loss to know which of the Syrian narratives they had in mind, or what event they commemorated during these ceremonies. The minister's concluding remark to the scoffer above-mentioned, was satirical, but certainly not incorrect. "You remind me," said he, "of the boy who, while looking in the glass, loudly averred that his father's face took after his. An ancient Greek philosopher believed that he had learned certain things of the Syrians. A citizen of New York is very positive that the Syrians learned them of the philosopher. Which shall we believe? or rather, let us ask the more profitable question, Why should that man assume that position with dogmatic confidence, without inquiry and without research? It was for the same reason that ten thousand others in that and other cities, assume ten thousand similar positions, with as little information, and as much assurance. Since the fall of our race, men have had an appetite for falsehood so spontaneous, that they often adopt it without inquiry, in matters of religion. It does not seem to man that he prefers falsehood in points of religious faith. If he were aware of it, this knowledge would become a part of the remedy.

CHAPTER XXVI.

CURE OF INFIDELITY.

We now have offered a few thoughts on the cause of infidelity. We could, as it were, only pen a few hasty words; endeavoring to offer some of the more simple and obvious reasons, by which we may know that it is caused by a want of knowledge, and by a want of love for the truth. Each of these items assists in promoting the growth of the other. We may resume the subject hereafter, and devote other chapters to the consideration of the cause of infidelity; but at the present, we feel disposed to say something of its *cure*. The cure of infidelity! What a subject. The cure of infidelity! Can it be cured? Indeed it can. There are difficulties in the way, but all that is arduous is not impracticable. It may be cured thoroughly. All who have ever used the remedy were cured, therefore it is safe to say that it may be cured with *certainty*. It is known to the world of physicians, that the treatment of those diseases wherein the sick deem themselves entirely whole, is attended with unusual difficulties, because they are not willing to use the remedy. Unbelievers usually think themselves well informed, particularly those whose minds are well stored with other knowledge, when the opposite fact is the truth. Whether this is or is not the cause, something does cause them to be very backward in the business of research.

Their hands hang down, and their nerves are all unstrung as soon as vigorous and industrious research is proposed.

Unbelievers inquire not after a remedy for their disease. If one is proposed, they turn away. If it is urged upon them, and they employ it, it is slowly, reluctantly, and perhaps sparingly and imperfectly. There are two remedies, or two modes of cure. Men may take either. One of these remedies is infallible; it succeeds wherever and whenever used. The other is almost universally successful, but under certain circumstances has been known to fail. We will distinguish these two modes of cure by the appellation of the *powerful* and the *all-powerful* remedy. We will leave the second, namely, the *all-powerful remedy*, for the last consideration. Men are more averse to the use of this; they dislike it more than they do the first. The *powerful* is not so certainly efficacious as the all-powerful; but men may be more readily induced to give it a trial. Therefore we will begin with it, and endeavor to make it plain, and to guard against obscurity, or that which may cause us to be misapprehended in any particular.

CHAPTER XXVII.

A REMEDY PROPOSED.

The powerful remedy. If one of the causes of infidelity consists in ignorance, then it is not hard for us to understand that the opposite of *ignorance* must be a promising remedy. We mean ignorance of the Bible and of ancient literature connected with the Bible. Information almost always cures; but it is not an easy matter to prevail on the unbeliever to labor for this knowledge. That knowledge is a powerful remedy, the author of these pages has seen tested during eighteen years of continued trial. He has watched these eighteen years of experimental process, with unusual and uninterrupted solicitude. By presenting a history of these years of trial, the doctrines which we deem important can be made plain, and misapprehension easily avoided. We may form theories, and believe that certain things are practicable, but our belief is not confirmed entirely, until we have tested the matter by long and faithful trial.

History of eighteen years' observation. As soon as the author had escaped from the pit of infidelity, he felt an indescribable solicitude for those who are unbelievers. He felt a painful anxiety which impelled him to inquire them out, and to cultivate, if he could, their acquaintance and friendship. The sailor who reaches shore, who looks back and sees the companions of his voyage approaching imminent peril,

or clinging to the fragments of a shivered vessel, feels more for them, because he has been the associate of their voyage. Unbelievers will converse with a friend, or even with an ordinary acquaintance, without growing angry, provided they are alone, and provided the approach is made in a plain and affectionate manner. Those who are in danger of meeting with insult when conversing on the subject of religion, are mostly such as begin the conversation before others; and the danger is more or less prominent in proportion to the number of those who are present and who compose the company.

Some unbelievers you may prevail upon to read. Some will even read industriously, if any one will furnish them with books. They will not inquire after books, or borrow for themselves. Others will not read, unless it is some work of satire, ridicule, or abuse of the Bible. Others will promise a friend who may request it, to read, and may even commence, intending to investigate, but they soon neglect and forget it. Others, again, may be prevailed on to read and inquire after knowledge, provided the friend furnishes the books, makes frequent visits, reminds them of their undertaking, and inquires minutely after their advancement. The author, from having mingled in their ranks for many years, was aware of the fact, that there are more, very many more infidels in each town and village of our country, than ministers of the gospel or followers of the Saviour are in the habit of supposing. He knew that many who were looked upon by professors of religion as almost Christians, were in reality infidels, but from

a variety of considerations, felt disinclined to avow it. To inquire out such, to seek the acquaintance of others, of all sceptics who might be prevailed on to read, and to induce them faithfully to investigate the subject of Christianity, has been a business which, for the last eighteen years, he has followed with more interest than any other. He never, during that time, met with a case where an individual made any thing like an honest and sincere investigation of the evidences of Christianity, that he did not conclude by saying of the Bible, "*This is God's book*," two only excepted. We will give a history of these two exceptions, or seeming exceptions. A faithful narrative of actual occurrences will make plain the doctrines concerning the cure of infidelity. Each case will require an entire chapter.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AN EXAMPLE.

Case 1. A young man of Kentucky received his collegiate education at an institution where the students became infidels with great uniformity. He was a son of one of the governors of that state. He was wealthy, and the hospitality of his board was extended with western profusion. I became acquainted with him mostly at his own fireside. After our intimacy had continued some time, I ventured to speak to him privately and affectionately of eternal existence. He told me that his sentiments were deistical, and that inasmuch as he did not reverence the Bible, while I did, he supposed our conversation with each other would be unprofitable. I told him that I only wished to speak with him concerning the heavenly authority of that book; that I wished to prevail on him to investigate fully the evidences of Christianity; that having once been of his sentiments, I was acquainted with them in all their length and breadth. I told him that without conversing with him minutely on the subject, I had no doubt he was ignorant of Bible facts and Bible language; but that, if he disputed his want of information, he might easily discover it by conversing about the ancient literature connected with any part of the holy volume. He looked somewhat surprised when I spoke of his being destitute of knowledge, but after a time confessed

that there was much history after which he had never inquired, and other facts he had forgotten which were connected with this subject. He inquired if I would permit him to read on both sides of this controversy, and looked surprised when I answered him in the affirmative. I told him that I would furnish him with as many infidel authors as he chose to read; that he should have an ample assortment, provided he would give an honest perusal to books written in answer. I offered to lend him any number of the books written against the Bible, provided he would attend faithfully to the other side of the controversy. He seemed to wonder at my proposal, but at length said he was inclined to read on my side of the question: inasmuch as he had examined his own, he was willing to begin with the advocates of Christianity.* He asked what

* The reason why I have always been willing to lend to an unbeliever any number of infidel books, provided he will engage to hear honestly a full reply, will be more fully explained in another part of this work. It is not amiss, however, to give a brief statement of the case in passing. It is as follows: If an unbeliever discovers that his favorite or champion author penned falsehood after falsehood, page after page, it will begin to awaken his fears and his suspicions, so as to incline him towards more faithful research. True, if he reads one side only, all will be received as smooth and plausible, unless he is a historian. But if he reads the faithful answer, he cannot avoid seeing, now and then, history to which he may refer; and if he refers to it, must also discover the want of verity belonging to his leader. That those who have hated Christianity should have written against it, is not strange; but that they have made untrue statements continually, is readily discovered by all who are not afraid to hear both sides. When this unmingled and uninterrupted falsehood is detected, it weakens the confidence the reader had in the fabricators.

I would consider a full investigation of the subject. I told him that I had no doubt he would be altered in his belief before he had read half as far as a full investigation; that I never had known one man who was not convinced of the truth of the Bible by the time he had given the subject only a moderate research. I told him, that out of the one hundred authors who had written for and against the holy book, I would send him six or eight only of the first I could procure; that after he had read these, I wished him to read the Bible with the notes of some commentator, that he might not be ignorant of the Bible itself any longer; and that if he would pursue this course of reading, I would be satisfied.

I went on to tell him what I must here pause in my narrative long enough to tell the reader. An infidel, when he begins to read on the evidences of Christianity, becomes more doubting and sceptical than ever, or more confirmed in his unbelief. This continues to increase during the former part of the research; but let him persevere in a thorough investigation, and he begins to have a view of the truth, and is at last delivered altogether from the thraldom of delusion. The facts are accurately pictured by the words of the much worn expression concerning the Pierian spring; the same waters that at first intoxicate, will sober again if drank plentifully. Many who begin to read, after glancing through one or two volumes hastily, lay them aside more entangled in error than they were, and thinking within themselves that they have read the strongest arguments that can be brought forward in favor of divine inspiration. Their

condition is of course more deplorable than it was. Others do hastily examine a few volumes, and are not well enough informed to be able to understand clearly, and fairly weigh the arguments of the author; these may desist before they have mastered the subject. Others may need a second or third perusal of the same pages before they can clearly view and appropriate the contents. Such may fancy that they have examined the subject, when they really have not. But of those who have read six or eight authors on that subject, calmly, attentively, impartially, industriously, and renewedly if necessary, I have never known one who did not cast away his infidelity. If any one should ask why we request the unbeliever to read many authors on the same subject, the *evidences of Christianity*, we answer, that no two minds take the same course in writing on this subject. The arguments and evidences could not be condensed or abridged into a score of large volumes. Of course each writer is expected merely to select such ideas as strike him most forcibly. True, I have never read the author on the evidences of Christianity who did not seem to me in some one way or another to establish the position, *This is God's book;* but the further we push our researches, meditations, and inquiries, the more readily can we proceed, and the more capable are we of comprehending additional research. The case is by no means an uncommon one, where a reader lays down an author on this subject with disappointment and dissatisfaction, finding in it, as seems to him, very little excellence of any kind. Twelve months after, upon taking up casually the same volume, he is aston-

ished at a thought there which he had not noticed before. He proceeds, and many of the arguments there appear as clear and distinct as a stream of electricity over a dark cloud. The reason of this is, that his mind is in a condition better to perceive, weigh, and prize the argument. His mind becomes thus better capable while reading other things on the same subject in other writers. Men love darkness rather than light; hence it is that many unbelievers are not capable of understanding and appreciating one half they read on this subject; indeed none are, until they pursue the investigation to some extent.

The young man of whom I have been writing, inquired what authors on the evidences of Christianity I chiefly recommended. I told him that I had a choice, but it was not so marked as to fix on given volumes indispensably; that I did not fear the result, provided he did not stop short of the given number, although he might peruse those productions the most readily obtained, or the first procured. He told me that he would read six or eight of the first books I should send him, and the Bible afterwards with Scott's notes. The following are, as nearly as I can remember, the books which I obtained and sent or carried to him, one as soon as he had finished the other. Alexander's Evidences, Paley's Evidences, Watson's Answer to Paine, Jews' Letters to Voltaire, Horne's Introduction, vol. 1, and Faber's Difficulties of Infidelity. Before he was entirely through with these books, he told me, with a serious face and voice, that he had something to tell me of himself that was indeed singular: "I am," said he, "in a strange con-

dition. I will confess to you, frankly and honestly, that these authors have met, answered, and fairly overturned every difficulty and every objection which I had mustered and opposed to the Bible as being from God. Furthermore, I do acknowledge that I have found arguments in favor of its divine authority so plain and so momentous that I am unable to meet or to answer them; *and yet I do not believe.* I cannot and I do not *believe the Bible!*" I had then a secret hope that he would still continue his course of reading. Old and long habits of infidelity have a tendency to hang upon us like settled diseases of periodical recurrence. But I did not speak to him soothingly, and I dare not say any thing beyond naked truth, even should it sound harshly. I told him that the defenders of Christianity had proved its truth, and that was all they had expected or attempted. I told him that God had left on record facts enough to evince that the Scriptures were divinely inspired; to prove this, and to *advise* obedience, was the mode of his dealing with men. "Compulsory measures," I added, "we never read of his using; and man himself, even wicked man, would rather that his free agency should not be taken away, and would complain at the thought or expectation of its being destroyed. These writers have proved their position, and you do not believe. Now you may and can walk the entire road to ruin, as a round rock can roll down hill; because it is one of the truths of the Bible, and one of the first truths taught in it, that man is a fallen creature. If you are not one of the fallen, the Scriptures are not true. If you are one of them,

then you cannot by nature receive truth so aptly and so eagerly as falsehood. If you are ever saved, it will require an effort and a struggle. Then, for the sake of undying existence, continue the labor which you have commenced. Go on and read many other books, a hundred of them. Notice the truth proved a thousand ways and a thousand times. But begin to pray. Ask the Spirit that made your spirit to cause truth to have its proper work of killing falsehood in your heart and soul."

I never saw him afterwards; he went the way of all the earth. I never heard from his state of mind afterwards, whether he continued to read or not. From his conduct during our last interview, I have some hope, which I would not *sell*, that he may have continued his research and his meditations on these things. I have a hope from which I would not part, when I remember how candidly he confessed it when his argument was truly prostrated, that he may, before his departure, have asked the Maker of suns to be his Redeemer. This is the history of one case where the powerful remedy, sober investigation, may have failed to cure, for aught I was able afterwards to learn.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A SECOND EXAMPLE.

Case 2. I had an acquaintance in days of boyhood with an amiable young man, who was liberally educated. After sixteen years of separation, we met again. He had become thorough in his profession, the law, by unceasing practice. He was an unbeliever, and the society with which he had commonly mingled at the bar, was of that description. After some long and friendly interviews, he promised me to read on the evidences of Christianity, and I engaged to provide him with books. I had stronger hopes of success in this case, from the fact that the law was his profession. I do not know why it is so, but it is the result of eighteen years' experience, that lawyers, of all those with whom I have examined, exercise the clearest judgment while investigating the evidences of Christianity. It is the business of a physician's life to watch for evidence and indication of disease, sanity, or of change; therefore I am unable to account for the fact, yet so it is, that the man of law excels. He has, when examining the evidences of the Bible's inspiration, shown more common-sense in weighing proof and appreciating argument, where argument really existed, than any other class of men I have ever observed. It is no easy matter to prevail upon these men to think about eternal things. They float along on the surface of secular schemes and

political turmoil; they have little time, they think, for any thing but business, and they look surprised for a moment when they are told that they are *ignorant* of Bible literature; but when they do read thoroughly, and examine faithfully, they are better than ordinary judges of what is weakness or what is force in reason.

Concerning the man of whom I have been writing, I am unable to remember distinctly the authors he read, or how many were furnished him. I never saw him afterwards, but so arranged that certain books were put into his hand. Of one volume I remember that I heard distinctly and accurately the result of its perusal. The book was the first volume of Horne's Introduction. A brother of the bar came upon him just as he was finishing the concluding page. This friend, knowing the nature of the study which had employed him, being himself a sceptic, asked as to his impression concerning its contents. While shutting the book slowly and gravely, he made the following reply, and said no more: "Were I a juror, and sworn the ordinary oath, and were you, as one of the parties to establish just this amount of evidence, *nor more*, *nor less*, I should declare, by my verdict, that your point was proved." I never heard from him again. When he died, his mind was impaired; but I have not been entirely without hope, that perhaps his reading was not altogether in vain.

These cases are the only two remembered through long observation, where, after ample research and full inquiry, a total cure did not seem to be the result. Many will promise to read, but will never perform

Others will begin with considerable earnestness, but soon desist. Others will pass on as with a task, and understanding the discussion with difficulty, find the labor very toilsome, and after a while begin to shun it. But there are others, thank God, who believe that it would be well for them to know with some degree of certainty, whether they are or are not to live for ever. They seem resolved to find out either the truth or falsity of the pages of inspiration, even should it cost them some labor. When they begin, if they find much of the subject dark, they *reperuse* the same treatises, or they ask after other authors on the same points, until they are capable of comprehending. Of such an effort as is made by these, I have never known but one termination. That was a perfect cure. They have said uniformly, after a thorough study, "This is the book of God."

CHAPTER XXX.

AVERSION TO COMMENTARIES.

Our natural tendency towards falsehood, or the secret suggestions of the evil one, often causes men to object against the perusal of notes on the Bible. The sophism used as an excuse and subterfuge in this case is often plausible. "We wish to judge for ourselves," say they; "commentators dispute between each other, but we will read and decide on our own account." Those who speak thus obtain information, generally speaking, from no source whatever. Dear reader, there are some Bible facts concerning which men do not dispute. Again, doctrinal controversy you may neglect, if you choose. Notice it not, if you are so disposed; but neglect not certain knowledge which is within your reach, and which you must acquire at the risk of your soul. Men do not refuse to read the notes of others on chemistry, astronomy, or philosophy, because writers have disputed here; but each author is willing to avail himself of the assistance of others—to use that which may seem to him valuable, and cast the rest away.

We have determined, dear friend, to give you a few plain examples of the value of notes on the Bible, that you may avail yourself of the toil of others, and see that you need their labors. Commentators can point you to facts most valuable, and such as you

may see as soon as named, but such as you would not have noticed had they not been remarked. The first case we give by way of illustration, shall be one which happened in connection with the seventeenth chapter of Revelation. And furthermore, dear reader, this chapter may be one of interest to you, for it speaks of the events of eighteen centuries. It is a chapter which concerns you much, for it also describes certain political events of Europe which are taking place at the present time, and it goes on to mention some affairs which are to happen in approaching years. Thus you may receive a double benefit by noticing the verses of this chapter. They exhibit the necessity of commentaries for the ignorant; they also inform us what the Lord has recently done, and shortly will accomplish. Lest you should fail to read the passage named, we will transcribe verse after verse as needed, so that each section shall be on the page fairly before us.

"And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters; with whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication. So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-colored beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet-color, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls, having a golden cup in her

hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication." Rev. 17 : 1–4.

A man read this chapter who had been an infidel. He had often read it and heard it read, like thousands of others, without attaching any meaning to the words. He did not observe, until he took up a volume of Scott's Family Bible, that this was a part of Scripture which explains itself, and is of course as plain as others, or perhaps more so; for when the Lord interprets emblematic language, he makes it as plain as any words known to us will permit. He had read history enough to have noticed the truth of the following remarks without assistance, but he did not observe the declaration of the last verse until it was pointed out to him. The last verse is, "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth." This reader was well enough acquainted with history to know what city reigned over the kings of the earth when Domitian was on the imperial throne, when John was in Patmos, for a long time before, and for many centuries after. There is no difference between unbelievers or Christians, as it regards the city that stood on the Tiber, clothed in purple, and which has been there ever since. We may here say to the reader, who may have been in the habit of glancing over pages of the Bible and noticing nothing, "Friend, if you do not know distinctly and certainly what city did reign over the kings of the earth in St. John's time, you had better not only inquire fully, but keep it before your recollection, together with several other particulars, for they may concern you more nearly in

the present day than you suppose." The man of whom we have been writing, who was startled on reading part of a commentary on this chapter, had read enough to remember something of the red cloth, and purple, and gold, and scarlet, and gaudy trappings, and sumptuous externals of both pagan and modern Rome; but while reading the following words from Scott's notes, he began to notice and remember historic pictures more distinctly: "The angel carried John in the spirit—that is, under the influence of the prophetic spirit he seemed to be conveyed into the wilderness—and he there saw a woman seated on a scarlet-colored beast. This woman was the emblem of the church of Rome; and the beast, of the temporal power by which it has been supported; and the latter was full of names of blasphemy, which we have had repeated occasion to mention." Almost any blasphemous title which we could fancy, has been assumed there: His Holiness—Infallibility—King of kings—Christ's Vicegerent—Vice-God—yea, even, God on the earth, etc. "The woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet-color, for these have always been the distinguishing colors of popes and cardinals, as well as of the Roman emperors and senators; nay, by a kind of infatuation, the mules and horses on which they rode have been covered with scarlet cloth; as if they were determined to answer this description, and even literally to ride on a scarlet-colored beast. The woman was also most superbly decorated with gold and jewels; and who can sufficiently describe the pride, grandeur, and magnificence of the church of Rome in her vest-

ments and ornaments of every kind? Even papists have gloried in the superiority of their church in this magnificence, to ancient Rome when at the height of her prosperity. This appears in all things relating to their public worship, and in the papal court, even beyond what can be conceived; and external pomp attaches men, attaches *carnal* men to a religion which interests and gratifies them, while they despise the simplicity of spiritual worship." Then follows a quotation from Addison: "This as much surpassed my expectation as other sights have fallen short of it. Silver can scarce find an admittance, and gold itself looks but poorly among such an incredible number of precious stones." These are the facts which the infidel had known, but had never applied. After reading thus far, he felt some curiosity to look at several additional verses. He read the following words, verse 6: "And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus; and when I saw her, I *wondered* with *great admiration*." The infidel on reading this, was ready enough to ask, and to ask aloud, "Wherefore should John wonder? What could he wonder at? After he had actually lived through the persecution under which Paul was beheaded at Rome—the gardens of Nero illuminated by the Christians, who were covered with inflammable substances, and set on fire where they stood with a stake under each chin to keep them erect as a torch, until, in the language of one of the many Latin poets, Juvenal, who then lived, 'they made a long stream of blood and sulphur on the ground.' When John well knew,

when he had lived to see that Rome would become drunken with Christian blood, as readily as a serpent would bite those within its reach, how could he marvel? Why should he wonder, when the angel was showing him for days to come, only that which he had actually seen in the months that were past? He not only told us of his surprise, as though it had been something new, but he says, When I saw her, *I wondered with great admiration.*"

After reading some further, he discovered that it was not pagan Rome, but *Christian Rome*, so called, which the angel was showing to the apostle. The bloody scenes of pagan Rome which had passed in St. John's lifetime, were gone; but when he looked forward into days then to come, and saw that which claimed to be the church and the metropolis of the Christian world, and the followers of the Man of Calvary, torturing the followers of the Saviour more cruelly, if possible, and shedding blood more profusely than heathen Rome ever did, it is not strange that he *wondered with great admiration.*

By this time the unbeliever felt awakened to further reading. Verses 7, 8: "And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns. The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition: and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is."

When the Spirit of inspiration is about to place before us the picture of a bloody and cruel power, any candid mind sees at once that a ferocious wild beast is the most brief and impressive representation. Whoever has closely searched, has discovered that on the page of prophecy a wild beast is the emblem of a bloody, cruel, and tyrannical nation. The unbeliever remembered the fact that Rome had been very bloody in her persecutions. He remembered that she did actually cease to be so when converted to Christianity, and that she did again become thus bloody and cruel when she degenerated into popery. He knew the plain history that the scarlet beast was, and then was not, and then was again; but he had not remembered, and noted, and applied these things, until he read the following remarks: "A beast is the emblem of an idolatrous and oppressive empire; the Roman empire *was* the beast under the pagan emperors: it ceased to be so when it became Christian, with reference to which the angel says, by way of anticipation, '*it is not.*' Yet it would afterwards 'ascend out of the abyss:' that is, when the antichristian empire became idolatrous and persecuting, and the dragon gave his power to the beast, it seemed to arise out of the sea, *the tempestuous state of the nations;* but it was, in fact, from hell, being Satan's grand scheme for opposing the gospel, and therefore after a time it would go into perdition, and be destroyed finally and for ever." Quotation from Newton. "The empire was idolatrous under the heathen emperors, and then ceased to be so under the Christian emperors, and then became idolatrous again

under the Roman pontiffs, and hath so continued ever since. But in this last form it shall go into perdition; it shall not, as it did before, cease for a time and then revive again, but shall be destroyed for ever."

After reading these words, our inquirer remembered with startling interest, that this outline of history was to be confirmed by facts, or the angel would fail in his representations. He remembered that, when the apostle lived, and afterwards when early writers were disputing concerning the book of Revelation, the following statement must have been made, namely, "*If Rome does not cease to be a cruel, persecuting city*, dropping the character of the beast, and then resume it again to retain it until destroyed, these verses are incorrect." But he remembered that seventeen hundred years were now passed since the death of St. John, and that Rome did not continue a pagan, bloody city. There was an intermission, a time during which she was not the beast, but the meekness of Christian love was visible there. This did not happen to continue; but when the beast was resumed, its bloody character returned, and still continued.

He then felt some curiosity to see what other statements were prophetically made. Verse 9: "And here is the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth." He was aware of the reason why in ancient days Rome was called the seven-hilled city; and he needed no commentator to tell him that the seven eminences on which she was built are there yet

Verse 10: "And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, and the other is not yet come; and when he cometh, he must continue a short space." He had read English law enough to understand what was meant by the expression, "*The king never dies.*" By the word *king* they do not mean the *man*, but the *kingly authority*. In a monarchy, the king and his power are used for each other, or interchangeably. It was not hard for him, then, to understand how and why the word *kings* stood for forms of government, or successions of rulers. It is not merely on the prophetic page that the word king is found to mean thus, but it is in the book of temporal statutes; and in the mind of the illiterate peasant, where kings rule, this tenth verse gives an outline of the history of Rome, much abridged but very bright. Those young persons who wish to become historians, but who complain of their memories, would do well to recollect this verse; so long as they recollect its words, a very striking profile of history will not be forgotten. The unbeliever who was interested with this chapter, and of whom we have been writing, remembered very distinctly, as soon as he saw it noticed, that five *kings* or forms of government had fallen or passed away after the building of that city. *Kings* were gone, *consuls* were gone, *dictators* had passed away, so had *decemvirs*, and so had *military tribunes*. But the angel said, "one is." The emperors reigned while John had the vision. But if six had then actually existed, was the angel telling of only two more kinds of governments? According to his interpretation, were we to look for no more than two in so long

a time, when six had already been seen in that city? The answer is, *only two.* And one of these was to be of the seven, and the other was to continue only a short time when it did come. Rome was under the jurisdiction of the exarchate of Ravenna, *but not long.* The space was short. Ever since, it has been under the rule of the pope. Verse 11: "And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition." Reader, the pope is a spiritual ruler in Rome, but you have often heard that he has a temporal authority also. He is of the seven, rely upon it. This beast was the Roman government in its last form. That form is papal, for there are no emperors there now. The going into perdition is to follow after a time. The unbeliever began to feel great astonishment that an abridgment of history, contained in so few words, and pointing at centuries that were to come when the page was written, reaching so far, and taking place so accurately, had excited no notice in the world. He read the next verses, 12, 13: "And the ten horns which thou sawest are *ten kings*, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast. These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." Reader, you have often heard and spoken of the ten kingdoms of Europe. They did not exist when John wrote, and they were not to begin to exist until the pope should begin to rule, for they were to have their power at one and the same time with the beast, during one and the same hour. If you had lived several hundred years after the death of St. John, and had

seen the pope or the *eighth* power begin to rule in Rome, you might have known then, not merely that ten kingdoms would be made of the fragments of that empire, but that ten should arise of such as would support the pope's authority. It is only the man who has read modern history, who can see the full force of these words as he reads them, "These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast." They did indeed! And in all the changes, revolutions, and overturnings of things in Europe, for more than a thousand years, there still were somewhere near ten powers, horns, who ruled at the same hour with the pope, and gave him their strength. Reader, it has been common for writers, when about to describe the multitude at large, to take for their emblem a wave of the sea, which rises, and foams, and roars, and sinks away to rise no more. This mode of description they have taken from the holy book. On the page of prophecy it is the figure used uniformly, we believe. Verse 15: "And he saith unto me, The *waters* which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues." After the unbeliever had read the sixteenth verse, he fell into a train of reflection which, dear reader, it might profit you to imitate. Verse 16: "And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire." His thoughts were such as these:

"These ten horns were, it seems, according to verse thirteen, to favor the whore, all of them. But

from this other verse, it seems they are after a time to begin to hate and to impoverish her. England has long since withheld her revenues. France did not begin to withhold or to impoverish her in any way until she, France, became an infidel nation. But have all the ten, all of them to waste her? So it states And indeed two more, Spain and Portugal, have already half broken their bonds of allegiance. These, as France has done, and as Austria and others probably will do, as soon as they discovered that the priests had been teaching nothing but imposture for centuries, not only cast away their old faith, but the Bible along with it! Is not atheism, or something resembling it, the natural outlet or termination of a false Christianity? The work of making desolate and naked has certainly been going on long. It is becoming more and more distinct. Recent events make it still more marked. But how is this? What is this I see, and what is this I hear? 'And shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire!' This is to come yet. Will it really be brought to pass? If eighteen hundred years of events have fitted the prophetic declaration so accurately, it is most likely that the last items also will not fail."

Reader, we have said that perhaps you would do well to meditate thus seriously. We will offer to you one reason for this advice. As sure as that burning, described in the eighteenth chapter of Revelation, ever comes to pass, so certainly some other things will take place which bear the same date with it, and which concern you. There are many things which cannot be very far before us, and which will come

unexpectedly upon those who continue contentedly ignorant of God's book; and they are of pressing import in the case of those who now live. We know that there are countless thousands, whose ignorance is so extensive and entire in sacred things, that even a plain verse of the inspired page appears dark to them; these, of course, will think other parts unintelligible to any one. We can only say to such, begin to *practise the precepts;* for these all understand, and they all speak lies to their Creator who say they do not. Read, and read on. If it is dark at first, continue and accept the aid of a commentary. It will not be long ere you will understand enough, such as the chapter we have read, to make you wish for more.

We must give other instances, showing that we may be reminded of an instructive and beautiful fact, without copying or obeying others. We may have pointed out to us in all the sciences, and in all the branches of earthly knowledge, most precious truth, and be benefited, without asking others to think for us, or imitating improperly their faith and views But we will first devote a chapter to the history of a reading infidel.

CHAPTER XXXI.

CASE OF AN INFIDEL WHO BEGAN TO READ.

THERE was a merchant of East Tennessee belonging to that class of men calling themselves Deists, who increased much in number immediately after our revolutionary struggle. All of them advocated morality of deportment, and few of them practised it; but this one of whom we are writing did, and his walk was exemplary. Truth he advocated and practised. Any defect in this virtue seen in an acquaintance, was enough to forfeit his esteem ever after. Dishonesty or any deceptive dealing had his unmitigated scorn. He had, in short, taken many of the Bible precepts without knowing where they came from, and practised them with unceasing vigilance. He would not believe that the favorite principles of his practice came originally from the Bible; for he who scorned the very name of Bible acted on these rules, while many church-members, professed lovers of the Bible, violated them shamefully. So long as the conduct of many professors near him would by no means compare with his own, he was not likely either to give credit to the Bible for what principle his mother, or others for her, had taught him from it, or to become uneasy at his condition, or convicted of sin. His honor, hospitality, patriotism, benevolence, and other excellences made him a favorite with the world. But if the world praised or admired him, how much

of an idol must he have been in the eyes of his children as they grew up. On their education he spared no pains. For their happiness in life, he advanced all that good example, advice, money, vigilance, or unceasing parental kindness could do. His children loved him, as they might be expected to love such a father, who possessed both amiableness and ardor of affections. They grew up, hearing as early as they were capable of hearing, and knowing ever after, that he smiled with scorn at the very name of Christ. Part of the result may be anticipated. His eldest son was an infidel. He would not condemn Christianity with that vehement confidence which belonged to older men, for he professed more modesty than many young persons who are reared as he was. He would even confess that many amiable men, who had read more than ever he had, did reverence the Bible; but he did not believe. He would even confess that investigation would not be amiss for him on this subject; but enjoying the amusements of life as he did, there was no likelihood that he ever would go through the toil of a faithful research. His father had succeeded in teaching him excellent moral principles, to the extent which he himself practised them, and he was crying peace to his conscience with but little cessation, if any. It was at length observed, that when professors of religion acted amiss, and he spoke in disapprobation of their conduct, there was more detestation of countenance, and more bitterness thrown into the tone of his voice, than usual. He began to notice their ill deserts more frequently and more readily than those belonging to other men.

The hill down which he was sliding, was plain enough to the eye of those who know something of the human heart, and of the different avenues by which men can reach ruin. The Lord, we believe, had it in view that he should not descend that declivity.*

He had a young wife called away from him by a slow and lingering disease. She had time and mind to think over *for ever* and its endless concomitants. Before she bade him farewell, she exacted from him a promise that he would read the Bible through, with the notes of Scott, Scott's Family Bible. One of the choice rules in which he had been educated, and upon which his whole system was built, was *never to forfeit his word.* After her departure, nothing short of *impracticability* could have prevented the fulfilment of his promise, should the task be agreeable or disagreeable. He began, and read a portion every day. As he proceeded, his difficulties and his objections were such as are commonly made under like circumstances. Strong minds, or vivid intellects, strange to tell, in this research will stumble over cavils ridiculous for their imbecility,† such as

* Some members of the church who lived near there, believed that the reason why his life was altered is as follows: He had a mother who often consecrated an hour in prayer, when none were present but herself and her Creator. They believe that the Man of Calvary can do whatever he pleases, and that if any one loves him, he frequently does choose that they shall have almost any thing for which they ask. None but his *obedient children*, however, know this fact by experience.

† One of the mountains in the path of this young unbeliever was the objection, that we are not told in the narrative how

in after-days they can scarcely believe, and did they not know it to be so, never would believe could ever have engaged their thoughts. He had not finished the work before he had made up his mind, slowly and deliberately, but *entirely*. He said, in the hearing of a circle of friends, "I believe the Scriptures to be the work of inspiration." His father asked him with surprise, and with a smile somewhat sarcastic, "And so you believe that book the word of God?" "I do, father," said he; "I do indeed believe it sincerely." Reader, one item of this case points out a truth which is important. They do well who note and forget it not. There was a friend near, who heard this declaration, and who rejoiced on the following account. He had long felt concern for the immortal welfare of the young infidel. While conversing together on the subject of religion, the latter had often said, "If I believed the Bible, as Christians say they do, I would certainly obey it. I would scarcely think or care for any thing else, save that eternity which they expect, and that judgment which they wait for." If his friend humbly replied to him that so we might all suppose, but we were besotted by sin and debased by the fall, and that the Bible teaches of a state of soul belonging to us all, which will lead us to slumber on the edge of death, etc.; adding, "Perhaps, if you did believe, you would move on much as you do now"—he was answered, "Do you think I would risk unending darkness and

Jacob found out that the purposes of his brother Esau were evil towards him. A trivial objection, if well founded; but in Genesis 27 : 42, the desired information is distinctly given

misery, while my Creator was offering me unending peace and splendor for the bare acceptance? No; I never would be such a fool: if every other man on earth was negligent, I do assure you I would not be, with such a prize as that at stake."

Some months after he had made up his mind concerning the verity of the holy book, he was called on by his friend, and the following conversation, in substance, took place between them. Friend: You say that you read some in your Bible every day; how does it appear to you now? Answer: I find something new and interesting almost every time I open it. It is a singularly instructive book. Friend: I rejoice that you read, and I rejoice that it is not to you what it once was, a book of tiresome insipidity, awakening your aversion. Answer: The fault was in me, not in the book. I was too ignorant to enjoy it. Friend: Yours is only a kind of literary enjoyment in reading that book, for I do not see your life changed since your belief in it. You once thought that you would not risk an endless hell half an hour, that you would not be contented a moment without a title to heaven, if you believed God had ordered the writing of that volume. Answer: That is another proof of the truth of the Bible. I am going on stupidly day after day. I never would have believed, no matter who informed me of it, that I should have acted as I am now acting, and I know that we are not thus infatuated in other things. We do not act with this mad imprudence in any thing else. It must be that sin has some strange effect upon the soul.

For the sake of those who expect to reach heaven, we add one sentence here, which others need not read unless inclined. It will be pleasing to some, and it does not take us long to state, that this young man, after a time, did obtain the Christian's hope. He hopes to see the author of a certain commentary on the right-hand side of a throne that is *high* and *white*. We should love to see them meet; but it will not be the only joyful interview.

CHAPTER XXXII.

USE OF COMMENTARIES.

THERE was a man who had undertaken to make himself acquainted with history. He had read until he knew something of the different ages of the world, and also of the habits, manners, and fortunes of many nations of the earth.

It was stated in the works which he had seen, that the main force of the Saracens consisted in their *cavalry*. These armies of horsemen were, in some respects, such as the earth has not seen since, nor was the like witnessed before. The yellow silk turban around each head, when their long extended ranks were drawn out in the sunshine at a distance, caused them to appear as though every individual was a king wearing a splendid crown. Their faces were somewhat remarkable. The Arabian countenance has been noted by travellers for its haughtiness or ferocity. Their long hair streamed on the gale, like that of the American Indians. Their African teeth, long and white, and coming to a point, made their visages more striking still. Their breastplates were mostly iron. But when they charged at almost the entire speed of the eastern horse, when their steel scabbards struck against their metallic trappings, when the feet of twice ten thousand chargers struck the earth in this headlong rush, it is said that the echo of their impetuosity can scarcely be fancied. Reader, sup-

pose a man who has known these particulars, takes up the notes of a commentator on the ninth chapter of the Revelation of St. John, and there finds it stated that the ravages of a certain army were described so many hundred years beforehand, and then reads the seventh, eighth, and ninth verses; what army would you imagine he would think was pictured?

Verses 7–9: "And the shapes of the locusts were like unto horses prepared unto battle; and on their heads were as it were *crowns like gold*, and their faces were as the faces of men. And they had *hair* as the *hair* of *women*, and their teeth were as the teeth of lions. And they had breastplates, as it were breastplates of iron; and the sound of their wings was as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle."

The individual, we have said, had read some history, but had never noted its application to this passage, until he was reminded of several items by the commentary. Was there any reason why he should not be struck with these facts, because they were brought to his recollection by the pen of another? He felt his curiosity so much awakened, that he determined to read other verses of the same chapter. Verse 4: "And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men who have not the seal of God in their foreheads."

He did not know how to understand this verse well. Indeed, it seemed to him that its interpretation must be difficult. If locusts are not allowed to eat any thing green, what shall they eat? When

we remember that it is their natural food, it strikes us as a strange sound to hear the oriental locust forbidden to eat the leaves of the tree, or the grass of the earth. The commentator reminded him of what he might read again in history, and when it was called to his recollection, it struck him as a fact exceedingly interesting. It was a rule of those armies, wide as were their ravages, cruel as were their devastations, to destroy no grain-field, to cut down no fruit-tree, and to waste nothing which constituted the sustenance of man. That this should have been the general order of the ferocious devastators was very singular. Reader, you could not count the number of interesting facts and incidents of this nature, connected with almost every verse of the prophetic or historic part of that beautiful and wonderful book. Men grow up in ignorance, and *special* ignorance of these things, not only because they love any amusement, or any worldly pursuit, in the morning of life, more than they do pious meditations; but also because their fathers and mothers see to it that they are taught more at school, that more toil and painful industry is expended in making plain any science, or part of a science, art, or literary pursuit whatever, than any thing connected with the book which tells us of our eternal interests.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

VALUE OF HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE.

THERE was a merchant of Kentucky who had been a settled infidel for more than fifteen years. He was unusually skilful in the management of sceptical arguments. His ability to cover or to pervert the truth seemed to have led him into a feeling of entire security. Nevertheless, after reaching middle life, a train of kind providences from heaven led him to a few deliberate meditations. These eventuated in his becoming willing to read a few more pages on the subject of Christianity, by way of inquiry. While looking through Scott's Family Bible, some notes on the prophecy of Daniel arrested his notice and fixed his attention, causing him to desire still further research into other parts of the book of heaven.

We feel inclined to notice one of the passages which seemed interesting to him, and which has benefited others greatly. Every chapter in the book resembles it, and has fed thousands; nor do we, by quoting this chapter, present it as more striking than any other in the prophecy, but a selection must be made, and we offer these verses, hoping that the reader will peruse all, frequently and prayerfully, together with the notes and comments of those who are capable of instructing.

"Thou, O king, sawest, and behold, a great im-

age. This great image, whose brightness was excellent, stood before thee; and the form thereof was terrible. This image's head was of fine gold, his breast and his arms of silver, his belly and his thighs of brass, his legs of iron, his feet part of iron and part of clay. Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet that were of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king.

"Thou, O king, art a king of kings: for the God of heaven hath given thee a kingdom, power, and strength, and glory. And wheresoever the children of men dwell, the beasts of the field and the fowls of the heaven hath he given into thy hand, and hath made thee ruler over them all. Thou art this head of gold. And after thee shall arise another kingdom inferior to thee, and another third kingdom of brass, which shall bear rule over all the earth. And the fourth kingdom shall be strong as iron: forasmuch as iron breaketh in pieces and subdueth all things: and as iron that breaketh all these, shall it break in pieces and bruise. And whereas thou sawest the feet and toes, part of potters' clay and part of iron, the kingdom shall be divided; but there shall be in it of the strength of the iron, forasmuch

as thou sawest the iron mixed with miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were part of iron and part of clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly broken. And whereas thou sawest iron mixed with miry clay, they shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay. And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever. Forasmuch as thou sawest that the stone was cut out of the mountain without hands, and that it brake in pieces the iron, the brass, the clay, the silver, and the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what shall come to pass hereafter: and the dream is certain, and the interpretation thereof sure." Daniel 2:31–45.

An intelligent man had read these verses frequently and heard them read, but he scarcely inquired for any meaning. He left them, as millions do the greater part of God's letter from heaven, not asking after any signification. He had read ancient history, but never thought of comparing the two together, until he observed the remarks of a commentator. He was then startled at the small *volume* of facts, which he had perhaps heard before, but never had applied. He remembered the extremity to which Porphyry was driven while writing against the book of Daniel. Porphyry, just after the apostolic age, could only shun the force of truth by hoping or asserting

that the events were accomplished before they were written. "But," said he, "I am not allowed this refuge, for a greater part of these verses have been fulfilling down through the fifteen centuries that followed the death of Porphyry; even were we to forget that almost all which is written of the Macedonians and Romans came to pass after the Greek translation against which he wrote was made."

Reader, let us notice this history of the world which the Lord gave the prophet so long since, and then we shall be ready to make some inferences which concern the cure of infidelity.

It was Megasthenes, we believe, who states that one of the Assyrian kings told on his death-bed that his empire was to be overturned by the Medes and Persians. That which astonished the heathen author does not surprise us, for we know how the dying king came by the information. He had it from the prophet of Jehovah. Daniel said to him, "Thou art this head of gold." The arms, two in number, represented a double kingdom. Babylon was taken by the Medo-Persian forces. Silver is not so rich as gold, but is more precious than other metals. The Medes and Persians were not so wealthy, splendid, or gaudy as their predecessors, but they surpassed greatly the nations that followed. The body of the image was of brass. The Macedonians, who vanquished and succeeded the Persians, were inferior to them in wealth. Brass falls below silver in value. The Macedonians used that metal on their armor to such an extent that they were called in Europe, *brazen soldiers.* Let us not forget that this third kingdom, this

kingdom of brass, was to bear rule over all the earth. This was not said of the silver, Medo-Persian, empire. If this had been the prediction, the prophecy would have failed. It was Alexander who, at the head of the brazen soldiers, in the language of history and prophecy, *conquered the world.* The fourth kingdom was to do the same, and do more. It was to break in pieces and bruise. Former victors had conquered nations and subdued them, but the Romans went further—they divided and subdivided, destroying lines and boundaries, forming governments, sections, and hierarchies, which no language will so well fit as that of *bruising* into *pieces.* All who are not thrown into pleasing astonishment, while reading this prediction concerning the fourth kingdom, to observe her state, conduct, condition, etc., more expressively described in these and in other verses—chapter 7, verse 7—than the pen of history did afterwards portray it, are kept from this enjoyment by their want of information. If we notice the Hebrew prophet while describing the Roman government, we must look beyond the nation he is picturing, three kingdoms back into antiquity, and from his post there erected, he delineates more expressively than those who lived at the time. Ignorance of history may prevent it, but to some this is striking indeed. Iron is not so rich as silver and brass. The Romans were poor, stern, hardy, temperate, plain, unyielding, and tenacious. The iron kingdom was to subdue the earth. It did take within the circuit of its grasp that which was the known world. As the centuries of this prophecy passed on, and the events described did roll by, they

were noticed by some. It is the wise that understand, and they are few indeed, in every age; but some few of them all along have understood and looked for that which was next to take place. Thus a Christian father—we believe it was Jerome—reminded his brethren that in his and their day the image was upon its iron *legs*. If the arms pictured a *double* kingdom, the legs will mark the same. Rome became the eastern and the western empire, Constantinople being the eastern capital. This Christian father lived after the death of Porphyry, and saw the prophetic history still going on. He would of course know, and his contemporaries who watched with him would know, what the toes of the image would designate. It was some time before the ten kingdoms were formed, which were to represent the ten toes of the image. These same ten kingdoms are pointed at in prophecy elsewhere more than once. We have already noticed chapter seventeen of the Revelation, where they are exhibited as fragments of the empire of the Cesars; and their subserviency and obedience to Rome are also mentioned, together with their final hatred and destructive animosity, which is at last to prove her ruin. From the position in which these kingdoms are held before us again in Revelation, chapter thirteen, we might infer that they would continue to exist at least twelve hundred and sixty years. We gather the same from the information afforded us respecting them in the seventh chapter of Daniel.* But

* We say to those who read the page of prophecy, that if they will search closely through the sacred volume, they will find the following fact. In different places, where the great

to the observer of history who contemplates the commencement of the ten kingdoms of Europe, and watches them for a time, it does not appear probable that they will continue in this divided state so as to resemble the ten toes or the ten horns for half that number of years, twelve hundred and sixty. These ten kingdoms of Europe—such as were to give their power and strength to the beast—were, it is true, to possess some of the old Roman iron in their texture. And they did have much of that character in their composition; but they were to have the weakness of modern degeneracy, which clay would not be so stern and durable. Those who have been watching this image, its growth, or duration, through different ages,

and glorious One is speaking to the sinful worms of earth concerning that which has not taken place, but which will certainly come to pass, he tells them that a day shall stand for a year; that is, each day of the time during which a given event was fulfilling, should represent a year expended in the accomplishment of it. If the Lord chooses to have a year thus represented, it is enough for us to know the fact. We need not ask for the reason. He has said concerning these events, that "none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." There is one truth which we should do well to remember. To an Israelite who had two modes of computing time, it did not sound strange to count years by days and weeks. A week with him meant seven years; each day of that week was a year long. If he told his friend that it was three weeks until the jubilee, he meant twenty-one years. If they spoke of a month, they often meant thirty years. And, dear young reader, if you say, "I cannot understand what is meant by seventy weeks, or forty and two months, or a time and times and a half, and these scripture terms," let me answer you. You had better understand! You learn more difficult things in cases of worldly business. And moreover, God has never said that your ignorance should be your excuse.

have no doubt felt much as the reader of history, who has also read the Bible, feels. When he sees such a character as Charlemagne, or Charles V., or Napoleon of France, arise and press onward, overthrowing all before him, and at length reaching out his giant arms entirely around some two, or three, or four of these kingdoms, press them all into one, he is ready to exclaim, "Surely the charm is broken. Can Europe continue any longer so divided as to represent the ten toes of the image, or the ten horns of a beast? Surely, hereafter it must be under the dominion of only one or two." But let him look a little longer, and he will find the cords once more broken. Although differently divided, the ten horns are there still. The revolution was long and bloody; nations were fractured and sifted through each other; but there are the ten toes still, and part of their composition is yet clay. Again, when he sees those sovereigns scheming in their marriage contracts for their children, negotiating for their marriage portions, etc., he is ready to fancy, "Surely it will not be long until several of these estates will become one, and different kingdoms will be consolidated, and fall by inheritance to the lot of one." Reader, different farms and large tracts of land are thus united and become the property of one, every day that the sun passes over us; but an old grey-headed Hebrew man, twenty-three hundred years since, was told to write concerning the kingdoms of Europe, "They shall mingle themselves with the seed of men; but they shall not cleave one to another, even as iron is not mixed with clay." These kingdoms were to commence a thousand

or twelve hundred years after the death of the prophet. Although this was a long time for the few of the wise to watch, who were looking in every age, yet it came to pass at last, and they were reminded that Jehovah does not forget his word. These ten toes were to continue more than twelve hundred years, acting in a given way and under very improbable circumstances. Some few of the wise were looking on. The horns or toes did thus continue, and they have thus acted.

There is one more declaration which was made long since, but has not yet been brought to pass. It was to be done in the latter days, and at the last times of these ten kingdoms. It was, "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom." Reader, do you think he will? He has not failed to do all that was said besides this, and we believe that he will keep his word also here. "The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom." This universal kingdom is the rock which is to become a great mountain, and fill the whole earth. This rock was once small; it was cut out without hands. This stone has been long cut out. It is to smite the image on the feet. It is yet to become a great mountain. Before we notice further the increase of this mountain, we will meditate once more on that which we have before thought of and written about, its being *cut out without hands* "That rock was Christ." That a rock should be cut without hands, seems to us incredible. That the religion of Jesus Christ should obtain a commencement in the world, and then remain there half a century, is equally strange and incredible, provided we look

faithfully at the circumstances under which it was introduced. Reader, the Lord, in making use of such an expression, calls for our attention. Before we are arraigned before him, we should do well to ask after the meaning of such a figure. It will require another chapter to ask after the propriety of such a comparison. Let us attend prayerfully to what the Judge has said to us in that language.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

When we find the introduction of Christianity expressed in prophecy by the *cutting out of a rock without hands*, we should inquire honestly after the propriety of the figure. If we had been in an adjoining apartment, looking on when the Lord's supper was instituted, when the emblematic cup was first handed round, and some one had asked us how long that memorial would continue in the world, how should we have answered him? Suppose much depended upon our giving a correct answer, upon our judicious opinion respecting the durability of that feast; we must, before we ventured upon a confident reply, make many inquiries and ascertain many facts. Reader, let us now make these inquiries, ask these questions, notice these facts, remember these circumstances. As sure as God calls to the men he has made, we should be familiar with such truth. If we had been thus spectators in Jerusalem, and it had been demanded of us how long that supper would in all probability be celebrated in the world, we must, before deciding, make the following inquiries:

1. Is this city where the feast is instituted, to remain long as it now is? Answer: No. That individual at the head of the table, who hands the bread and cup, has told his followers that one stone shall

not be left upon another in the loftiest buildings. He has informed them that the room where they now are, and the house containing the room, and the city which contains the house, will be crushed before destruction's rudest ploughshare, and that ere long! His inspired followers have written, "As often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do show the Lord's death till he come." Again, they explain his coming to be at or near the end of the world. The question still recurs, "Does he expect that any will continue to show his death until the end of the world?" He had informed them, that ere long war would riot in its wildest, bloodiest revel; that nation should be dashed against nation, and shivered like a potter's vessel; and history has informed us that so it was. Under this view of facts thus far we might have supposed, if there, that no one would remember him through the turmoil, unless we had known who he was. Such, no doubt, would have been our conjecture.

Before asking the second question, it is necessary that we should remember distinctly, that men are often well pleased when certain things are enjoined by their religion. When some of the ancient nations were told that if they used wine to intoxication, through the long nightly revel in honor of Bacchus, it would please that deity, they had no particular objection to the command; nay, it pleased them. When the Mohamedans are told that the more of their enemies they kill with the sword, the greater shall be their sensual joys in paradise, it does not displease them. Revenge on those they hate is not

hard to cultivate. It requires no sacrifice. It is ordering them to do that which they love to do When the Asiatic is told by the priests of his religion, that the practice of adultery through a long feast of obscenity will conciliate the favor of a particular deity, he is well satisfied with that worship. When others are told to hang up the mangled bodies of their adversaries, in honor of the god of war, compliance requires no self-abasement.

Question 2. Does he who is instituting this memorial require of his followers that which men love to do—to fight, or to feast, or to practise fornication; and does he forbid only that which men already hate? Answer. He enjoins meekness, the love of enemies, turning the cheek to the second blow, temperance, chastity to the strictest thought or heaven is lost, patience, non-conformity to the world, etc.

Question 3. Does he not promise them that if they follow him, and are called after him, they shall thus arise to worldly honor? Answer. He tells them, "Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake."

Question 4. Does he not offer them safety at least? Answer. He said, "Whosoever killeth you, will think he doeth God service."

Question 5. Surely he engages for their peace and rest? Answer. All the pledge he gave of this kind was such as the following: "They shall scourge you from city to city." He will tell those twelve men sitting around him, that but one of them shall die a natural death.

If we had been there on that night and heard him say, "This do in remembrance of me," and had we

been asked earnestly as to our expectations respecting the durability of the ordinance or his religion, in view of the facts we have named and of similar truths, we should have answered, "No one will do this or care for him twenty years from this hour." This would have been our deliberate judgment, unless we had known that he was the Maker of stars, or unless we had forgotten to estimate that which we well know of mankind. He who does not know that men love ease and indulgence and sensuality, has but a narrow circle of mental vision. He is a fool, or he speaks falsely, who does not confess that the hope of honor, affluence, and exaltation had and still has an overflowing influence with the sons of men.

The name of the individual who promised persecution, but no flattering advancement; who permitted toil and poverty, but no sensuality; who said, "This do in remembrance of me," his name now is heard and felt as no other name is. It shakes the soul of those who deny it. It is felt by those who hate it, by every member of every club that meets to revile it. Reader, we cannot understand this clearly, unless we notice the difference between *honoring* a name and *feeling* it. We had better see these points clearly, on many serious accounts. That we may not mistake, let us look at nothing short of facts.

Fact 1. The Mohamedan does honor the name of his prophet. He honors it enough to cause him to plunge his sword in your heart, were you to speak against it. When he prays he does not weep, his voice does not falter. When he pronounces the name of his prophet he does not tremble, as by a melting

influence; he honors, but he does not feel that name.

Fact 2. Fifty persons of very different characters were sitting in one house—this has happened every Sabbath since we were born—the tear was in the eye of every one of them; they sobbed and could not speak. They were listening to something about the Man of Calvary, *but they had heard it five hundred times before.* They felt that name in some way. And so does the bitterest hater of Christianity you can find in any street. We may see this likewise, if we choose, and if we are not afraid to look at facts.

Facts on the other side. Fact 1. If you will sit down by the side of that man who is near the hotel fire, or at the dining-table, or in the stage-coach, and exhort him to be a worshipper of Vishnu or Siva, or implore him to become a Mohamedan—being sincere and in earnest we mean—he will laugh at you. Or talk to him with mere scientific interest on the different religions of the earth, and he will hear the names of five thousand gods that are worshipped by millions pronounced with entire indifference. He does not care whether you speak in praise or reproach, reverence or ridicule. It is not so with the name of the Sufferer of Gethsemane—far from it. You will see his eye flash with anger, and his brow gather instantly. Meet him in the street, or on board the vessel, it matters not, the name of Christ he will not bear. He reviles it, and the most humble and affectionate approach on the subject of eternity in the name of Christ, he calls intolerable. Ah, my

infidel brother, you mock that name, but you feel it. And you will feel it more and more, in heaven or in hell, for ever and for ever. The religion of the Saviour was introduced and kept in the world as others were not, and this stone will fill the whole earth, although it may appear improbable to those who do not observe that that rock has been cut out without hands.

Application. Multitudes have read this portion of the second chapter of Daniel, or other parts of the same chapter, or other chapters in the same wonderful prophecy, and have passed on with but little excited thought. After this they have, while reading the remarks of some pious commentator, been reminded of historical facts which they had read or been driven to read for the first time, and they have been brought to see beauties and marvels in the book of God, which their ignorance had before hid from their eyes. Let it not be supposed that we state these facts of Daniel alone. We take these passages as samples; but in aiming at the cure of infidelity, we exhort to the study of the whole volume, the wonderful volume, the Bible.

The man who erects a druggist's shop, need not become the inventor of the chemical processes by which alkalies and affinities are formed. He may avail himself of the labors of those who have gone before him, without being called a servile copyist. Thus, if you have not twenty years to spare in searching in a given way through the holy Scriptures, to compare verses, and trace Hebrew verbs, or to ask after heathen history, you may avail yourself of the labor of others. An author on geography will

tell you more in an hour than you could explore or measure for a week, should the pride of originality make you decline the assistance of others in this case.

A commentator will bring before your view, within the compass of a few days, more objects throughout the dim wide field of antiquity and tradition, than you can yourself collect by years of toil. But the adversary of souls would rejoice, were you to decline the assistance of others, and labor none yourself.

CHAPTER XXXV.

AN EXAMPLE.

CASE OF THE USE OF THE POWERFUL REMEDY. TWO professional men once formed an attachment for each other. We may designate them by the appellation of the youthful and the more aged. The younger friend had been liberally educated, and he commenced his profession thoughtless, joyous, and from the first successful. The more aged friend feared that his indifference in things of religion was based on *infidelity*—made inquiry, and found his conjectures were correct. At a subsequent interview, he approached his young friend, offering a volume, and an address like the following, from his heart:

"My friend, I believe it is your wish to do me a favor when you have it in your power. I know that you would arise from your bed at midnight, and put yourself to much inconvenience to serve me. I am about to ask of you a favor which you can confer. I have it more at heart than the value of much property, and it will cost you very little to comply with my wishes." He was answered as he had expected, with the most open declarations of readiness to act where it was in his power to benefit his friend. The older friend then continued, "The favor I ask is, that you will read this book through, soberly and faithfully, endeavoring to master the train of thought as you proceed. When you are through, should much

of the treatise be forgotten, or appear obscure, read it again."

The work was cheerfully undertaken, the promise given, and the book received. The volume contained, as well remembered, Paley's Evidences of Christianity, and Watson's Apology. When the friends did not meet, they corresponded, and this subject chiefly engaged them, whether personally or by letter. The young man, after he had read the book, laid his hand casually upon another author on the same subject. He was sufficiently excited to undertake its reading. Before he finished this, he said, "I have a spirit, and I have no doubt it will be lost, or very happy for ever." His more aged friend asked him to read Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul. He complied; and while reading, thought that he had entered into a compact with his Redeemer, which gave him great joy. He was so elated, that he has ever since—fifteen years—tried to persuade others to do the same.

Cases resembling the above are taking place, wherever a similar course is pursued. Books of this kind are not much read, for reasons which will be found in the following chapter. In fifteen years more, neither of those two friends may remain on the earth. They both seemed to be made very happy by the occurrence named; and that enjoyment seemed to last for fifteen years. Perhaps it may add to their pleasures for more than fifteen years, after they go hence. It has already been worth more than the toil expended on either side, many times told.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

WORKS ON THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

RECAPITULATION OF THE POWERFUL REMEDY. Books on the evidences of Christianity are but little read in our nation.

Some of the reasons why this is so it would be well to observe.

1. Many who are inclined to unbelief, whose doubts are enough to paralyze their energies in seeking conversion, are not confirmed sceptics. They do not call themselves infidels. They do not know the name of these authors, or that many of the books exist. They do not inquire, and those who never were thus annoyed themselves, suspect none of infidelity but the bitter declaimers against the Bible.

2. These books are little read, for few of them are in circulation. Inquire in an ordinary village for ten such authors, and you will not be able to find them. The minister perhaps may have one or two. These few are not much read, for the following reasons. Perhaps here is a man who has prevailed on an unbeliever to read a certain volume. He finishes it, and informs his Christian friends that he is more encompassed in cloud than he was before. They are disheartened, and he is not benefited. They perhaps ask another to read the same work, hoping to see a happy result in the second case. The man perhaps looks into the book occasionally, and lays it down;

takes it up again, and thinks it hard to comprehend—thinks it does not touch the points which perplex him. He lays it down again, the world presses, his business harasses, amusements divert; and after some months they find he has not read, and they lose all hope in the case. After meeting a few similar results, they believe that almighty power could save, but they have little confidence in means. If soldiers of the cross had a full assortment of truthful volumes, and were to make a prayerful effort, they would meet cases where unbelieving friends and neighbors could be induced to read six or eight volumes; and perhaps repeat a part of the research. In these instances they would scarcely ever find one, if ever, who would still dispute the message of high heaven. They would meet those who would refuse, and those who would only half perform; but one case of a soul snatched from the gulf would repay all the labor. We will here name some who have written on the evidences of Christianity, so that out of the list some six or ten may be asked after by any inquirer. From the following list, it is a matter of comparative indifference *which* is selected, so that *enough* is chosen and read until the subject is mastered. It is strangely true, that these books are not known to Christians. The few that are in circulation are scattered and invisible. Enough of them can rarely be found together to inform extensively the mind and heart disposed to cavil. The following books are a few out of the many which are more than worth the cost of possession. Evidences of Christianity, by Grotius; Paley's, Locke's, Addi-

son's, Campbell's, Sherlock's, Lyttleton's, Le Clerc's, West's, Douglass', Leslie's, Lardner's, Porteus', Beattie's, Soame Jenyns', Jones', and Burnet's Evidences of Christianity; Alexander's Evidences; Faber's Difficulties of Infidelity; Newton on Prophecy; Stackhouse's History of the Bible; Scott's Family Bible; Horne's Introduction, vol. 1; Watson's Apology; Jews' Letters to Voltaire; Prideaux's Connections; Horæ Paulinæ; Paley's Natural Theology; Shuckford's Connections.

The reason why many, on beginning to read the advocates for Christianity, sink deeper into the mire of their infidelity, is worthy of our notice. It is intimately connected with the transaction of the garden and the forbidden fruit. The author who writes on the evidences of Christianity begins, very commonly, to overturn the cavils and sophisms of unbelievers; such as he has heard urged, or such as are often made. The young reader perhaps never heard these objections urged against our religion. He certainly never did hear or see the one half of those in use. He did not know that they existed. As soon as he sees them on the page of the Christian writer, for the purpose of refutation, the objection seizes the powers of his soul. The answer he does not receive—he cannot notice. Such is the nature of fallen man. This is true of those who would be glad to believe the book of God. Darkness has for their souls a superior attraction. It is not until he reads the work the second or the third time, that he begins to observe the quibble less, and the answer more

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TESTIMONY RESISTED.

CONCLUDING REMARKS CONCERNING THE POWERFUL REMEDY. We must shortly endeavor to look at the all-powerful remedy, at the remedy which never fails when used. In this concluding chapter on the powerful remedy, we must not neglect to observe something of the amount of evidence which God has furnished in this remedy. We have been writing of the external evidences of Christianity; we now ask as to the extent and the force of this evidence. How much of this external testimony has the Creator furnished? The answer is, He has given enough to prove the truth and inspiration of the Scriptures, and no more. He did not intend any thing further. Let us not be misunderstood. We do not mean, that this point is not proved again and again, times out of number; but this kind of testimony does nothing more than prove it, and can do no more. Take the verbal testimony of a score of credible witnesses to a given fact, in a court of justice, and the incident is proved; bring in ten thousand others, and it is not more than proved. There may be a man who disbelieves still. But if we place the incident before his eyes, it is established then as verbal testimony could not do it. If he refuse to receive the testimony of one hundred respectable witnesses, he may discover to us an unloveliness of soul by such a position; nevertheless,

we would confess that eyesight is of the two the stronger testimony. That the Bible is the book of heaven, is shown by this external evidence with a frequency which cannot be counted. But it is only proved. No coercion was ever designed. Men may yet disbelieve. It never was intended to make it impossible for a man to ruin himself, if obstinately bent in that direction. If man's rationality, his judging for himself, were taken away from him, it would not please earth, and we suppose it would not rejoice heaven. Man does judge wrong, and choose to his own hurt; but he does not wish to be turned into a piece of thinking, necessary mechanism. Reader, no matter how many historical facts; no matter how many prophetic verities and accomplishments; no matter how many celestial sentiments and beauties call to you to say, "This book is from heaven," you can disbelieve it. It is not only possible, but it is of easy performance. You can continue uninformed concerning the history, or you may forget the facts once noticed. Others you can neglect to apply. You may besot your soul with sin until incapable of feeling the heavenly sentiment. You may close your eyes and ears, and harden your heart, until you can believe or disbelieve any thing. It has been tried. All the evidence of this character which could be given may be resisted. Testimony of this description, piled higher than the mountains, has been gainsaid. We come to notice in the next chapter, a kind of testimony which cannot be resisted—the remedy which is infallible. But before we reach this, we will look at one more case which exhibits

the fall of man, and reminds us of our love for darkness more than light. It is one out of the millions that exist every day, telling us that all testimony may be resisted where the heart sets in a different direction.

Concluding case. There was an agriculturist of the West who was wealthy. He was a man of good education, and an infidel. The most of his friends, associates, and relatives hated Christ with an unconcealed dislike. A train of circumstances gave a certain preacher of the gospel access to this man's ear, which few ministers could obtain. They had each other's confidence and esteem. The minister, at different times, informed him plainly and fully of the want of information prevailing in the army of unbelievers, and told him that this ignorance was likewise his. He requested him to read a number of the books we have named, and at length addressed to him the following sentiments: "My friend, eternity is long, and the prize you may win invaluable, therefore I must be plain with you. You may read these books, and reperuse them, for you have little else to do. The amount of newspaper invective which you read, shows what time and vision you could expend, if so inclined. You are judging about religion, and never heard nor read much more than the revilings of its truth. You begin to suspect that much as you know on many subjects, you might know much more of this. Your judgment, if wrong, may lead to hell. Your judgment may be wrong, because you are ignorant of the facts from which you should draw your inferences. Much as you know of business, agriculture, law, or

political affairs, you have learned nothing here but a few total falsehoods, which you have read, or heard retailed, until you begin to take them for history. You have, like scoffers in general, kept other information so entirely excluded, that you are even lame in conversation, unless your antagonist is afraid to speak plainly. If I ask you of the letter of Tertullian, I find that you do not know within three centuries of his age, or on what continent he was born. If I ask you of a passage in Tacitus, I find you remember not what he said of the crucified One. If I inquire after a passage in Joel, I find you have almost forgotten, or never knew of such a book in the Bible. I speak of the fulfilment of a prophecy, and find you did not know that it had ever been uttered. I ask you as to the confessions of early haters of the gospel, and discover that you know better what they have written of every thing else. I do affectionately entreat you to inform yourself well, and then decide. You may be positive, if you choose, as soon as you are well prepared to judge. The result is too momentous for you to risk an error here. Will you read the books? Read on the other side, if you have not seen enough of perversion. Take more, and keep on until you are thorough in facts. Read on the side of truth faithfully, and cunning misstatements will begin to lose their influence over you. Continue still to read, and after a time every entire lie stated by a celebrated opposer of the gospel will weaken his cause in your estimation. Will you read?" He was answered, "*I will read some.*" The substance of the following dialogue then took place.

PREACHER. Why not read industriously? you confess there is much that you might learn. If so, there is a possibility you may be wrong. We should never decide in *whole* where we know but *half*, especially if it be an inquiry of momentous consequence.

UNBELIEVER. True, I see that there are many things I have not learned. I would be willing to know them, but I fear to promise you, lest I should fail, for you know that we have not always a taste for every kind of reading.

MINISTER. If you may possibly be wrong, and I may possibly be right, then you may be now neglecting mercy, and *rejecting* heaven; and in the hour of final conflagration you will feel how much activity was called for at the present hour of your indolence, because your mistake can nevermore be rectified, and your failure will continue unendingly. For the sake of a *possible* fortune, men will toil. Will you not, for the sake of a possible eternity of joy, read a few books attentively?

UNBELIEVER. Perhaps I ought to read something, as you request; but you know we are often called away by pressing business. Visiting our friends sometimes makes us forget our studies, and furthermore, what few pages I have seen on this subject were somewhat dull to me. I fear that I may find the investigation irksome to one of my habits and accustomed indulgences.

Reader, the following fact is that which I wish you to note, and avoid forgetting it, lest God should make you remember it at an unwelcome hour. If that man's friend had pointed him to a faint proba-

bility only of doubling his estate by a moderate exertion and no risk, he would have embarked in the effort. If he had told him of only a distant danger which threatened his fifty-thousand-dollar farm, he would have been vigilant, and that speedily. But to inquire after joy and splendor everlasting, to watch against eternal loss, he could not be influenced. Nothing could move him to begin. What is the reason of this? It is because we have an appetite for any thing rather than the true religion. The rolling rock moves down hill with ease. Fallen man climbs the hill of truth with difficulty, even when he wishes to ascend. How swiftly, then, may he rush when he *seeks* the dark vale of falsehood below.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

A FURTHER REMEDY.

THE SECOND REMEDY, CALLED THE ALL-POWERFUL. We come now to the second part of the inquiry, concerning the cure of infidelity. The remedy which is infallible, which never fails, is called the *experimental* evidence of Christianity. This remedy is indeed invincible. Millions have used it with success, and no one has ever used it in vain. It may then be asked by some, Why are there any unbelievers? Why is not every infidel cured? *The reason is, they will not use it.* Dear reader, do not think this metaphorical rhapsody, or figurative expression, the result of strange enthusiasm. We mean what is written. We mean, that there is a cure which all might use, many have used, thousands will not use, and that it is actually all-powerful. Furthermore, you shall understand us, and understand the *modus operandi* of the remedy, if you are not afraid to follow us, and to observe faithfully and to meditate honestly of that which concerns you. You are capable of seeing this subject through its length and breadth; and if you do not, it shall be your fault and not ours, for with the help of God we will place it before you. We have resolved on childlike simplicity; and for the purpose of keeping at a distance from every thing obscure, we must ask you to remember first principles

of which we are all aware already, and concerning which there is no dispute. There is no difference between us concerning three principles, or acknowledged facts. That these facts may be made more distinct, definite, and observable, we will divide this chapter into sections, and devote a section to each one.

Section 1. *Experimental testimony is the strongest evidence which exists.* If we were to see a man of truth and probity approach a pile of new and strange fruit, and after partaking of it, declare that its taste was singularly delightful, and that its effect was immediately exhilarating beyond the excitement of wine, we might believe the statement, or we might not. One man might believe, and another might discredit the avowal. If we were to see ten more individuals, of equal respectability, approach one after the other and partake, each one declaring forthwith that the taste was strange but delightful, and the result rapid exhilaration, the evidence would be much strengthened by their statement. Add one hundred more, and the testimony might be called more than convincing. But it still does not entirely equal our own experience, when we partake and find it as declared. Experimental testimony is the strongest evidence by which we are influenced.

Section 2. *Man cannot feel by simple effort, and by mere resolve.* Should some one of boundless resources offer you an estate equal to a nation's treasury, provided you would love with glowing attachment the son of a Russian officer, whose name you hear, but who is an entire stranger to you, you could

not succeed by simply trying to do so. Our affections are not moved in this way. No matter how much you might desire to win the prize, you could not arouse in your bosom a devoted affection by mere resolve. You might act the hypocrite, but nothing more. Suppose you were offered a large amount of gold, if you would hate with sincere abhorrence some one who had been long dead, say the father of Demosthenes the Athenian orator, you could not rouse yourself into vehement commotion, unless it were hypocritical agitation, for all the gain which could be offered you. Man cannot feel by simple effort, and by mere resolve. If we could not either love or hate these objects of our entire indifference because we wished it, we should do well to remember that the difficulty would increase, were we asked to hate purely the object of our devoted love, or to love with ardor that which we cordially detest. We cannot in this way move our souls at will in any course we choose.

Section 3. *That which disposes us to feel when we hear it, does not increase in force by frequent repetition.* If I tell you of a murder which does not move your feelings, then repeat the same facts and circumstances but find that there is some reason why you do not feel, I am not to expect success by frequent repetition of the same narrative. If I were to go over the same detail every hour throughout the month, and should others take it up, and a thousand men tell it over, you might grow *weary*, but *never tender*. Nay, should any one relate a most affecting history, which caused you to weep profusely, you

would begin to weep less before the week was out, were he to relate the same each day; and before the year was ended, should this custom be continued, we question if you would regard any incident in the narrative. Our feelings cannot be coerced by mere repetition of a truth.

Reader, thus far we have spoken the common sentiment and the common language of men. This they all say, whether pious or ungodly. We presume, then, that thus far we are agreed. We have never known these plain principles, and these simple, every-day facts disputed, until they are used in connection with religious truth. These simple truths have been the experience of every one oftener than he can remember, and we have never known them controverted until they are found to be a lever which overturns infidelity, and then we have heard them denied by those who had before conceded their clear, undeviating verity. Read these first principles over again, and if you deny their existence, let it be before we come to their application.

CHAPTER XXXIX.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

THE ALL-POWERFUL REMEDY. It is not so proper to say of the Christian, *he believes*, as to say he *knows*. We mean the full-grown Christian. The infant cannot walk, cannot sit alone, cannot lift a pound; yet it is of our race. There is so much difference between the performance of an infant and that of the tall man, that we can scarcely see their resemblance; but the infant is a child of Adam, a member of our family. The Bible calls a weak Christian a babe in Christ. Others, full-grown men and women in Christ Jesus. It is true, that in the present age the most with whom we meet are only babes in Christ, if indeed born again. The infant Christian understands the use of this remedy with almost as much difficulty as the unconverted. He has nothing about him but mustard-seed graces, invisible except in a perfect light. But we now speak of the full-grown child of God. It is the privilege of every one to drink freely of the milk of the word, and to receive his growth speedily; but men are indolent, and some even pass their whole earthly journey without growing perceptibly. The full-grown man in Christ knows the Bible is from heaven, with a consciousness which you cannot take from him. Let any man whose mind is unimpaired, hold his hand in the blaze of a torch as long as he can bear it, and

after it is withdrawn let another tell him he does not feel pain; tell him that it is only imagination—heated fancy; let him enter into very ingenious and plausible arguments concerning caloric, to persuade him that it is all fancy or fanaticism; let him jeer, deride, supplicate, or threaten, it is all the same: you cannot change his creed in this case, because it is a matter of sensation, and not of simple opinion. So it is with the Christian—with each one who uses the *all-powerful remedy;* it is a matter of feeling, of consciousness with him. If the man who has held his hand in the blazing torch, were to sink into forgetfulness as it regards the sensation of pain, and hold his hand again in the blaze, he would soon have his knowledge recalled. The sensation of the Christian is as plain and direct as that from the lamp, and it is repeated ten times every day. All may use this remedy who choose—the experimental evidences of Christianity. We now enter into further explanation by giving the history of incidents as they occurred.

EXPERIMENTAL CURE.

ILLUSTRATIVE INCIDENTS. CASE 1. There was a man of middle age, of cold, slow, doubting tendency of soul, who obtained at last a Christian's hope. He hoped that his name was in the book of life; but he was only an infant, a weakly infant. He seemed to grow a little in the course of six or eight years, but very slowly. He dreaded his deficiency in one feature of Christian character. The apprehension gave him pain. He read in one section of his Master's letter, "Love your enemies." He for

a long time, like thousands of his brethren, concluded he would not hurt them, or fight them, or return evil for evil, and hoped this was love. He could hear others say of injuries received, "I can forgive, but I will not forget it," and he could see in their case clearly that this was Satan's kind of forgiveness. It made him fear in his own case, that he did not love his enemies. He remembered that his bleeding Leader was too stern in his purity to accept of a false love. He knew that it did not mean a love of approbation for their sins, but the love of compassion. He knew that the love of compassion was a tender and melting love, and that he did not possess it. He sat down trying to feel it, but did not succeed. He tried again and again for a year. He did not love his enemies. He read on the subject. He thought it over in every way; he prayed over it for another year. He did not love his enemies. He went to making stronger efforts, for he thought it would be hard to miss heaven at last. He continued trying for eleven or twelve years. He thought at times that his feelings were perhaps softer, but he soon found it was not love. At length he found that by mere effort he could not move his affections. He knew that he could not *wish* a lofty rock into a rill of milk, and he could not wish hatred into love. He became alarmed He fasted and prayed in earnest, and at an hour when he was not looking for it, at a moment he was least expecting it, he loved his enemies. It was a real love. He knew it in the same way, reader, that you know mirth from woe when you feel it yourself. If, when your bosom is shaken with the sob of anguish

after losing a smiling son or daughter, your friend should say to you, "Perhaps you are mistaken; are you sure it is not mirth you feel?" You would tell him, I have felt both, and the difference is very striking. This man, after remembering how long and how hard he had tried to love his enemies without success, began to feel that it was the Spirit of God, the invisible Spirit, who is willing to have intercourse with men who wish it and who quit sin, that had changed his heart and planted a new feeling there. After this, if he began to forget his need of this kind of heavenly help, he would be left suddenly in his old condition. But when this threw him again on his knees, and he received the dew of heavenly influence in his soul, he was reminded of the existence of the Holy Spirit. He was conscious of this Bible truth. The flow of love in his soul was a stronger sensation than the cup of water which he drank communicated to his palate. If you would try to persuade the thirsty man who dips and drinks from the spring, that his feelings are fanciful, that the water is hot instead of cold, you will not alter his belief in this case

CHAPTER XL.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

SECOND REMEDY. The wicked may go to the practice of the precepts of the Bible. Those who practise with humble industry, are met and assisted. All, we mean, who apply to the Saviour of lost souls, quitting their sins, are met; none are rejected. Those who live as commanded, receive in their own spirits a *consciousness*, a *knowledge* of the inspiration of the holy Scriptures. Men may not only have their sins forgiven, but they are not compelled to remain infants in experimental religion. This all-powerful remedy is offered to all. We must continue to notice it, to look at it again and again. We must exhibit it until all can understand its nature.

EXPERIMENTAL CURE.

ILLUSTRATIVE INCIDENTS. CASE 2. A professor of religion felt concerned at the fact that his soul was not melted at the history of the scene of Calvary. He had once felt deeply at the picture of a Saviour's sufferings, but these feelings had left him. He heard a minister tell it over, but he had heard it or read it a hundred times before. He turned to the Testament and read again, and tried to feel; his affections were dead. He went to the communion-board; there were the cup and the bread speaking of blood and crucifixion; it was all old

He had thought it over, trying to feel it, a hundred times. Reader, if you are unconverted, and if you think one might succeed in such a case by simple resolve, *try it.* Create the feeling in your own bosom, and God grant that you may *feel.*

Not to dwell on minute particulars, we must hasten briefly to the result. The callous professor prayed and prayed week after week. He did not feel. At last he humbled himself, fasted and prayed. When not looking or expecting to feel, the name of Christ melted his soul as words cannot describe. Any sentence he would read in the book, or hear from others, of the Saviour, made his tears overflow. The word Calvary would awaken in him emotions which he could not express. This man's experience that God is willing to converse with men, did not stop here. There was another doctrine which he did not feel, tried to feel, and failed; he went for help to his former Benefactor, and succeeded. He desired another trait of Christian character, and endeavored to assume it by strong determination, but failed. He humbled himself before his Lord, and received bountifully.

CHAPTER XLI.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

SECOND REMEDY. Dear reader, there are two considerations which we here entreat you to treasure. First, the two individuals of whose experience we have been writing, are not the only witnesses. They are selected from a cloud of ten thousand times ten thousand. It is true, that a vast majority of professors never do reach beyond a state of infancy; of course they do not belong to the cloud to which we refer. Many professors, and possessors of piety a little more advanced, receive answers to their prayers and forget it, or do not observe distinctly from whence their assistance came. This evidence of man's depravity—*Christian* stupidity—is visible every day. But the Lord has always an army of witnesses on the earth, such as the two we have noticed. The ungodly neighbors of these witnesses call them men of truth, and would take their testimony in a court of justice, but pay no attention to their statements concerning their *knowledge* of eternal things.

Again, impress it upon your recollection, that these witnesses have not this sight of heavenly things merely once or twice in a lifetime. They do not thus seldom have communion with God, and experimental knowledge of the doctrines of holy writ. This continues daily and hourly, so long as they live up to

their duty and near to their Saviour. Here is a witness who feels perhaps to-day that he does not mourn as he should over the low state of religion. After passing through the effort we have partly described before, the Spirit touches his heart, and every breath is a sigh of anguish or a sob of grief for the desolations of Zion. At another time he observes that he does not feel as he should, the nothingness of earth, and a proper indifference to the things of time. He seeks for this, and his success tells him of an omnipresent God again. Then he wishes to feel for the heathen, or he wishes to feel more pungent shame for the sins of early life, or he desires more industry, or more patience, or meekness, or more exulting joy, or more of any one out of the long catalogue of Christian graces; and when he comes to ask as suppliants should come, he receives, until he repeats again with high exultation, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he will stand at the latter day upon the earth; and though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God: whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another." Job 19:25. Reader, the watchful, obedient, and industrious soldier, although he walks by faith and not by sight, yet by gracious, spiritual, and bright communications, has as it were a daily sight into heaven. He obtains that deliberate confidence in eternal things which an apostle felt when he said, without hesitation or an expression intimating doubt, "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness."

We must relate two more incidents before we

come to the application. Reader, think and pray over these things, for your soul is precious.

EXPERIMENTAL CURE.

ILLUSTRATIVE INCIDENTS. CASE 3. A person who had obtained a hope in Christ, felt great reluctance to conducting family worship. But he believed household devotion to be indispensable, and resolved to attempt the duty, however self-denying. He continued it for nine years, wishing it was not so irksome, but never omitting it. When his prayers were heard, it was strange to what an extent the Lord manifested himself to him when before that altar. His feelings might be dull elsewhere, perhaps cold at church, sluggish even at the communion-table; but in morning and evening worship he frequently had such views of heaven and heavenly things that he could scarcely officiate. He stated that he had sometimes been reminded of the fact recorded of Toplady before his death, that his spiritual views became so bright that he exclaimed, "Lord, hold thine hand, for thy servant can bear no more."

The witnesses of the Lord are not merely brought to feel on subjects of indifference, but in a direction opposite to the current of their former affections They are made to hate that which they once loved, and to love that which they once hated. They are allowed any amount of evidence. The treasury can never be exhausted. No matter what degree of certainty any one may wish to connect with the words, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," he may ask it of God; and living more and more devotedly to him,

in the discharge of Christian duty, he may reach a certainty as cool and deliberate as that of the man who says at midnight, "I have no doubt the sun is down," or who says, "He shines," while looking at his blinding glory. There is a passionate man; he may obtain meekness. There is a covetous man; he can have liberality. There is a hard-hearted man; he may become uncommonly tender. These men, in obtaining these graces, will learn that their Redeemer liveth, and they will be benefited. They will gain that which is indeed valuable, and which will make them instantly more happy. Oh that wicked men would begin the practice of Bible precepts, on more accounts than one. Dear, unconverted friend, in a few chapters more we will inquire, in your case, if you can obey the holy book so as to obtain divine evidence, and also how to do it. But we first have to call up a few profitable thoughts or to repeat some that have been mentioned.

CHAPTER XLII.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

On the pages of the Bible certain things are promised to those who seek for them—heavenly and spiritual blessings, humility, victory over any besetting sin, devotion, Christian graces, etc. Other things are not promised, and no child of God ever seeks and obtains them. Personal exaltation, victory over enemies, etc., are of this class. The wish for such things is sinful. Again, there are certain favors we may ask for and hope to obtain, and yet not be certain that we shall obtain, because there may be something in the way to prevent, which God sees and we do not. Of this last class is the recovery of a sick relative, the conversion of a friend, the rebuke of pestilence, etc. The first class of mercies named, a spirit to hate that which is hateful, and to love that which is lovely, the witnesses of Jesus Christ always obtain when they seek as directed. Their uniform and striking success makes their evidence so plain that they need no more. Additional evidence, however, is given, like an occasional flash of light from on high, in answer to petitions for such favors as they are not certain always to receive. These answers to prayer appear to the unconverted all as a matter of casualty, and as that which would have happened had no prayer been offered. The Christian discovers too much uniformity, before he watches long, to think

the events he is praying for take place from chance. We will give examples of these evidences before we leave the subject.

Illustrative incidents. Case 4. There was one who had disbelieved and ridiculed spiritual agency. He particularly and specially disbelieved the doctrine that Satan is the author of any of our evil suggestions. He once rode to meeting with a gay young merchant. Before it was over he heard two ministers agree together, in a whisper, to pray for that young man. While their heads were inclined, no doubt in prayer, he saw the young man turn pale, walk forward, and ask the prayers of God's people. This partial sceptic had never denied that God ever influences our feelings, so firmly as he had disputed the agency of the evil one. That same evening he was present when the young man approached a preacher with a look of alarm and said, "Sir, I went into a grove for the purpose of trying to pray, and I could not do it. No matter when or where I made the effort, as soon as I would kneel, there came into my mind thoughts the most horrible, blasphemies the most inexpressible, such as I never had in all my years of vanity or scenes of wickedness. Can it be that I am getting more wicked just as I attempt to repent?" The preacher answered him, "My young friend, we know how body operates on body, for we can see that and handle it. Spirit is invisible; it is not tangible. We do not know how spirit strikes or operates upon spirit; but it does. The evil one never saw you likely to forsake his ranks, and he never was afraid of losing you before. He exerts himself

often when threatened with desertion. He really can in some way inject into our minds most abominable thoughts; but they are not sinful in us, if we do not entertain or approve them. If that man in the street were to offer you much gold to commit murder, you would not be guilty if you cordially hated his temptation."

The spectator felt somewhat surprised to learn that incidents of this kind were not uncommon. After mingling with revivals, and meeting with perhaps a hundred cases more, he began to suspect that we are liable to persuasive spiritual influences, both good and bad.

EXPERIMENTAL CURE.

ILLUSTRATIVE INCIDENTS. Events asked for take place contrary to the most probable appearance of things.

CASE 5. A man once lived who was naturally timid, but in the concerns of religion he was especially diffident. He was a hundred times more ashamed to be heard to pray, than he once had been to be heard to swear. This detestable cowardice crippled and tormented him for many years. His son was constitutionally diffident like himself, and should he ever forsake the world, the almost certain result would be a similar backwardness in the service of the Lord. These thoughts, and the fear that his son would serve Satan long, perhaps until almost middle life, before he gave himself to God, threw the father on his knees to ask a double favor, namely, the conversion of his son in the days of boyhood, and the vic-

tory over cowardice in the Redeemer's army. A sacramental meeting approached. He believed his prayer answered—for a reason only understood by those who have felt it, and therefore it need not be explained or described here. He did not converse with his son, but he watched him. He saw him unite with the church, and he heard him pray in public without delay as soon as called on. During the course of a few years, when many improbable events asked for had thus taken place, he could say, "If these things happen, they happen with strange uniformity, and contrary to probable appearance."

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE REMEDY DENIED TO NONE.

All may use this remedy who do not incapacitate themselves by sin. Those who incapacitate themselves are not excusable because of their inability. The man who bores out his own eyes has not the light of the sun to complain of, because he cannot see. The man who corrodes his palate until his taste is destroyed, cannot blame his food for his want of enjoyment in eating. Reader, if you will take the ten commandments in all their spirit and all their bearing, also the sermons, parables, and all the sayings of the Redeemer, as uttered by him, unite them together, and meditate upon them, you will then, we have no doubt, tell us that the practice of each one would be very lovely. We presume this because it is acknowledged, and has been asserted by the leaders of the infidel forces in different generations. If you can find any Bible precept which is unjust, immodest, or immoral, we may well say, Do not practise that. If all the precepts of the Scriptures are correct, we are not acting amiss to obey them, and to exhort others to obedience. They must suffer in some way who do not observe that which is excellent in itself. None ever became infidels but those who cease to obey the precepts of the Bible, more or less, or those who were reared to disregard them from infancy. The Spirit of all truth

and purity influences us towards truth. The most wicked of men is still a debtor to the Holy Spirit for what little religious truth he may still retain. A man has not abandoned all Bible truth, nor is he totally forsaken by the Holy Spirit, until he becomes a thorough atheist, either in creed or practice. We do not mean a wavering atheist, but a hearty one. The Spirit of truth does not abide in a bosom filled with pollution. He takes up his constant residence in the heart of those who obey, and those alone. He begins to withdraw his influences from those who begin to hug enormities, and from those who turn their backs on God's commands. They begin to question truth, from whom he begins to retire. The light of heaven begins to appear dim in the eyes of those who have insulted the Spirit of truth until his agency is weakened. The loveliness of truth begins to resemble darkness and deformity, in the view of all those who are more or less left to themselves. If the commands of the blessed volume are good, let us exhort all to obey them. If you wish to be instructed by the God of heaven, if you desire to be led by the Being who made you, if you are willing to be guided by the author of all truth, *do as he tells you.* You will find his orders in the Bible. Practise heartily and industriously all that is commanded there, and you will have heavenly communications and light from on high. If you are one of those who have neglected the precepts of holy writ, and the system of Christianity begins to appear uncomely in your sight, and cold unbelief begins to chill your ability to pray, listen to what the mighty Counsellor says: "Return

unto me, and I will return unto you, saith the Lord." Some will make the following difficulty when called on to begin to do right.

"Do you ask it of us, who disbelieve the Bible," say they—"do you ask it of *us* to begin to obey it?"

Before we answer your question, fellow-immortal, we must mark the difference between those who *do not believe*, and those who *really disbelieve the book;* and we must take pains to avoid any mistake respecting our meaning. Attend, then, to the following illustration.

Suppose that a man of standing and of truth were to awake you at midnight, and to tell you concerning your farm and house some miles distant, that the fire was approaching it, and that its danger was imminent. Suppose, while you were preparing to go to save it, another man of equal verity and respectability rides by, and tells you that he has just passed your property, and that there is a total mistake; that there is no fire there, and no danger exists. Here we might say, there is such an equilibrium in testimony, that you scarcely know how to act. Then suppose a third messenger, somewhat inferior in credibility, comes along and tells you the fire is approaching your estate. Here you might say, "I scarcely know what to believe; but I must *act*. Indolence is inexcusable where there is any preponderance on the side of danger. It is safer to act." You are not confirmed in your belief of the advancing conflagration, but you are unwise if you neglect exertion. Go now and act for your soul. If you tell us that you cannot believe the Scriptures, we answer, go and obey them It is

true, if you are a confirmed disbeliever, we have but little hope of your action; but all who sincerely and earnestly obey these precepts, receive the same evidence of their truth that the man who approaches the fire receives of its warmth. If he were to stand at a distance and say, "Oh that I could believe there was heat in that fire," we might offer many strong arguments to prove it, but the most convincing measure would be to prevail on him to approach. If it were true that he had a strong aversion to the exercise of walking, and a dislike to the sight of fire, and he were to tell us that he was confident, and without a doubt, that no warmth existed there, we should have but little hope of prevailing on him to act; nevertheless thorough action would produce a certain result. He might advance a few feet, and then call out exultingly that he felt no warmth. He might approach a short distance again, and then turn away, calling out with indignant vehemence, "I knew it was so, I feel no heat;" but all this has been only a sham trial. So it is with many who say they have complied with the dictates of revelation. It was only a half-way obedience, a partial action, a false compliance with those blessed commands. All who walk up to the fire know its efficacy. So long as they remain there, they remain convinced. Those who stand nearest have the least perplexing doubt. Reader, do you say to us, "Shall I act, although I doubt?" If you doubt, this is the reason why you should act speedily and decisively. Let us now tell you some things which you believe, and others which you know. If you are an atheist, we are not address-

ing you just now; but if not, the following facts fit you. You believe,

1. That God is a being of purity. You believe,

2. That if he is pure, he will not be disposed to take pollution into his immediate habitation, or near to himself. You yourself do not tolerate that which you esteem filthy. He may deem that unclean which we do not hate. A man hates what a swine does not, because of his superiority over that animal; but the Lord's exaltation above us is immeasurable. If you say that you cannot understand how that may appear *sin* to God, which seems very passable with us, you speak unadvisedly. Now for that which you know:

1. That if you stood in a room where were collected a hundred persons, male and female, your fellow-worms of the dust who live here below with you, all sinners like yourself, you would not be willing that every word you have uttered, and every thought which has passed through your mind for the last month, should be told or pictured before them. You know,

2. That if all your actions and all your wishes were told to a church full of your fellow-creatures, they would not sound well; you know that you are a sinner. We will prove this to you in another way. We will prove that you know that *the magnitude of an offence is measured by the excellence of the being against whom it is committed.* You know,

1. If you were to insult one of the animals of the field, it would be a matter of little moment, because that four-footed beast is low in the scale of existence. You know,

2. If you were to walk up to your fellow-man, your equal, and offend him, it would be a more serious occurrence, for he is of a more exalted nature. You know,

3. If a tall seraph from the upper army should sail on splendid wings before you, alighting near, on an errand of heaven, you would feel less safe in offending him, because of his superior excellence. You know,

4. God's purity is unspeakable; his excellence and grandeur are unlimited; his power and majesty are boundless; all his traits of loveliness and greatness are infinite. Who shall dare offend him?

If you do not know something of the real desert of sin, at the time of reckoning he will make you know it. If what you call a small offence is measured by *his worth*, it becomes unlimited in its ill desert. These things you know, and of course, if you are not afraid to think, you know that your case may be a very unsafe one. You know that perhaps your danger may be black and imminent as the silent, but advancing cloud. Then act; take the safer course, begin to act, and continue it. Bow and tell Jesus Christ all you would tell him if you saw him. Do every thing he has directed as scrupulously as you should do were you to hear his lips utter the orders.

Every man *may become* a Christian. Many will not. Every Christian may have the most satisfactory evidence of *experience*. Many do not try. If you are an atheist, you will be noticed in the next chapter. If you are not an atheist, but settled and unwavering in your creed of gospel rejection, perhaps

the first remedy, external evidence, although the weaker of the two, promises more in your case. The last remedy will cure *any who will receive it.* No matter who you are, atheist or double atheist, if you will bend to each order there written, you will be cured, and your life will be everlasting. But we have very faint hopes that you will come to the light after the Holy Spirit has left you. If you are a confirmed atheist, he has left you now; whether or not he will return, he only knows. If you are a confirmed, unwavering Bible hater, yet still believe some one made the stars, you believe one truth. The Spirit is not gone, but he touches the strings of your soul seldom, and but very faintly. "Return unto me, and I will return unto you," saith the Lord. There is a balm in Gilead; there is a physician there, but he requires *obedience*, and men do not love the remedy.

Some say, "We do not know all the commandments contained in that book, and yet in force." We answer, you are not obeying such commands as you *do* know; you are not trying to fulfil such requirements as are plain before you. That which is lovely cannot hurt you. Try it. That which is just cannot injure you. Begin it. When that man presented you with a cup of water, and you said, "I thank you, sir," you did not do wrong. You believe that to express gratitude, is not amiss. God gives you many cups of water, and tables covered with food. The Bible orders you to say, "I thank thee." Let your children hear you say this as the favor is repeated. Will you begin? Ah, we fear you do not wish it

If you will not obey here, we need not repeat the hundred orders that follow. You are averse to compliance; a secret which you scarcely suspect is, you have no relish for doing what God directs you.

Conclusion. If one man approach the fire and declare that its cherishing heat is abundant, another may go there if he chooses. If he stand off, calling for evidence and declaring that none is given, the builder of the fire is not to blame. If, notwithstanding the fact that not one since the creation ever approached closely without making the same avowal, he call out that no testimony is offered him, he uttereth lies. If he exclaim vociferously, "I know that your testimony is all fancy, heated imagination, and fanatical delusion or hypocrisy," and when answered, "Then approach and judge for yourself," he still stays away mocking, then we can only say, *Farewell.* Faithfulness and truth demand that to that farewell be added, *Thy blood be upon thine own head.*

CHAPTER XLIV.

ATHEISM.

CHRISTIANS usually believe it impossible for any one to become a real atheist. Their minds are divinely influenced, and they forget what they would be capable of believing were they left to themselves.

The most of wicked men doubt if there are any sincere atheists. They are heaven-restrained themselves, but they do not know it. To every unconverted man, the suggestions and influences of the blessed One appear as nothing more than the simple operations of his own mind. The ungodly are unconscious of holy persuasions, because it seems to them solely and entirely their own mental effort. But we say, to the saint and the sinner, *there are atheists by the million.* If you were abandoned, you would forthwith become a settled and sincere atheist. We agree that many calling themselves atheists are not entirely forsaken, and that at times they feel a degree of apprehension; but, notwithstanding this, there are armies of *atheists.*

For the entire atheist we have no hope. Those who die may, and sometimes have been known to revive; but when we see our friends expire, our hope for them in this life is gone, because the cases of resuscitation are so rare. Omnipotence could restore the complete *atheist*, but we have no reason to expect it.

To the partial atheist we say, our hope for you is very feeble; for a little more, and your head is beneath the billow; but we ask you to read Paley's Natural Theology twice over. We ask you to read Dick on the same subject. If these do not influence you to try the second remedy, the experimental evidences of Christianity, then we can only say, *farewell.*

We have now done with atheists, and with the subject of atheism on their account. Further argumentation with the atheist we have none; yet, on another account, we must pursue the subject. For the sake of the rest of mankind, we take the case of the atheist to show the fall of man, to exhibit the doctrine of total depravity, to prove what man would be without heavenly restraint. To hold up atheism as an example illustrative of important truth, may require more chapters than one. We have before stated, that the clear consciousness and constant recollection of the fall of man is all-important for those inquiring after truth, and for those attempting to practise virtue or piety.

We deem it a momentous duty to look faithfully at what men are capable of believing, if left to themselves. Accompany us then through the creed of the atheist, and observe the doctrines of holy writ exhibited in his case. There are crowds of atheists now alive, but their race is not yet finished. If there were no atheists, it would prove either that man is not a fallen creature, or that the Spirit does always strive with man so long as he lives on earth.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

We wish to dwell a while on the belief of the atheist, that all may be reminded of the amount of evidence man is capable of *resisting*. Our illustrations are of course drawn from things around us. We must endeavor not to write in the language of the chemist, or of the philosopher, but to use the plain, every-day dialect understood by the little boy, or the uneducated, without assistance. It is necessary that we should not be misunderstood in our most ordinary expressions. In the first place, then, we must define fully what meaning we attach to the word *accident* or *casualty*.

If we see a quantity of bricks overthrown in the street, and hurled along the earth in impetuous confusion, we call their position the result of *accident* or casualty. We mean, that mind was not employed in directing their location.

If we see them lodged in a shapely wall, we at once assert that their position was the result of thought, and not of *accident*.

We have seen the forest where the sweeping tornado had snapped the trees, and hurled them across each other in tangled prostration. We then call the particular location of those timbers accidental, meaning that *design*, *thought*, or *plan*, did not effect it. We have seen trees ranged over each other, and

squared into a house: then we did not believe their position *casual*, we had no doubt but *thought* was employed in their arrangement.

The atheist is one who believes there is no God. He believes that man is the highest being in existence. He believes that the things we see either came into being of themselves, or have been always here; for he usually believes they are here *now*. It is not material in the controversy, whether he contends that the world, or the matter of which it is formed, is of recent date, or that it has been here from eternity; but it is more common with them at the present day, to contend that matter has always existed. Of these, we shall chiefly take notice. We shall do no more than tell the creed of the atheist, and the creed of the Christian again and again, placing them frequently side by side.

We name different facts telling first what the Christian believes concerning them. In looking for these facts, it matters not where we begin. The objects nearest us are our choice; we have only to aim at being understood by the unlettered, with immediate ease, and we had better pain the ear of the scientific by the coarseness of our words, or method, than to fail of comprehension from the unlearned.

Young reader, when you look abroad you see very many breathing animals around you. You know that the air we breathe is not fit to breathe again, so that if closely confined, although we might not feel injured for the first few minutes, yet, after a time we must die. You may not be aware that the air you breathe is so totally changed, that you

would expire forthwith were you to continue its use. It is true, that were you to receive it back again into your lungs, unmixed with the other air around you, it would cause your death. There is no danger that this will happen. Those who know nothing of these facts are mostly safe; because in the action of breathing it is thrown some distance from the face, and even when the head is covered, it cannot be drawn back again, without receiving much of the other healthful air near us, along with the draught. But where many live near us, it is natural to inquire why the atmosphere is not so poisoned, frequently, as to cause our death. So it would: even on the muster-ground, where hundreds crowd into a circle, it would be felt; but, in the first place, by breathing, this air is made a little heavier than it was before. If it is only a little heavier than the common air around us, then it will sink down to the earth; and it does thus fall. This increase of weight causes the air which has been once used in the crowded room, to sink down to the floor. It seeks every crevice to pass lower, or it rolls out of the door and finds the earth. This increase of weight is either plan or accident. It is a little matter in one sense, but it saves too many millions of lives not to be, too, extremely *fortunate*, or very *kind*.

Again, it is natural to ask why we do not dread the increase of this altered and unwholesome air. Why does it not accumulate, rising higher and higher, until it reaches above us, and we sink? This would be the case: animals not erect, that breathe, carrying their nostrils nearer the earth, would perish

first, and man at last would fall, were it not for a few additional *casualties*, or *mercies*, which we will now enumerate.

First, when this air, thus destroyed, reaches the earth, the grass which is there drinks it up. It goes into the pores of weeds, plants, and vegetation in general, and two blessings result; the poisoned air is used, and taken out of our way, while it enters into the composition of that which grows, and aids its rapid increase, as a most kindly manure.

But again, there is a region where winter reaches, and destroys the earth's green covering. Nevertheless winter is not feared, for it is a kind design or a fortunate perchance, that water will absorb this gas. The snow is on the ground, and you need not fear. It has rained, or the frost has fallen and again dissolved, and you need not fear; the wind is blowing towards the surface of the river, or the distant lake, etc.

Sometimes, in seeking the lowest situations, this heavy air sinks into a well, where there is neither grass, grain, or water to absorb it, and there it remains and threatens the incautious adventurer. These facts, in one view, are little things; but the continuance of the human family depends on their existence: of course they must be either *wise*, or *fortunate*.

There is another kind of air, or gas, which is equally deadly, called by chemists, hydrogen gas. This would destroy us, if plentifully used at once. Those who wade in streams, and walk on the decaying leaves on the bottom, have seen it bubbling

up to the surface. It will burn if the torch is applied. Every thing that rots will, like the leaves we have mentioned, give out or produce this unhealthy gas in abundance. If we then look around and notice how many trees, and weeds, and leaves, and chips, and animal substances, etc., are constantly dissolving, we may well inquire again, why we are not all destroyed with rapid and cureless devastation. So should we be, were it not on account of certain circumstances, which we will not pass by. It *chances*, or it was *contrived*, that this gas is lighter than the air around us; of course it will rise up towards the clouds. Whatever is lighter than water will swim, and whatever is lighter than air will rise towards the top of the atmosphere. This gas is so much lighter than the common air, that it ascends swiftly past our faces, and floats beyond our reach.

Those who are disposed to think, might inform us that their fears were not at an end, for *fortunate* or *kind* as is this regulation, still the top of the air may, in time, be overburdened, and this cumbrous poison descend to our extermination. If we are saved for a time, what is to continue our relief? The answer is, that two small facts exist which save our earth. One is, that through *casualty*, or through *wisdom*, it is so contrived, that this gas when united with another gas, called oxygen, already and always floating at the top of the air, or in the regions of the clouds, forms water. Water is formed by these two pressed closely together, but the pressure must be *hard*, to make them unite. The question next is, how this powerful pressure is effected high up in the air.

There is a fluid in nature called *electricity*, commonly called lightning. The unlearned or the young person can remember that this electricity or this lightning can strike any thing very hard, for he has seen where it has shivered the hardest oak. This lightning, when it dashes from the cloud down to the earth, strikes the tree. When it flies from cloud to cloud, it strikes these two kinds of air we have named, presses them suddenly and powerfully together, and forms drops of water. Young reader, if you cannot understand this, there is one thing which you know about it. You have seen it rain hard just after a flash of lightning and a peal of thunder. Much of that water was just then formed.*

The poisonous air, hydrogen gas, is removed from threatening us, and at the same time the shower is increased to fertilize the field. The crop is augmented. The table of the atheist is covered with tasteful viands. He fills himself; thanks no one; stares at his superabundant mercies, and says, "There is no God!"

Two facts we should notice just in connection with these items. First, that if the first-named gas, or kind of air from which we are saved by its weight, and by its being removed through the instrumentality of plants and water, had been lighter than the atmosphere, so as to ascend above us, this would have been

* We are told that recent discoveries evince that the surplus drops are not thus suddenly formed by compression. Be it so. Dispose of the rising of hydrogen in any other way, no matter how; as soon as the truth is reached it indicates a contriver as strikingly as any mistaken theory could possibly do

no remedy; for the electricity in the upper air could not dispose of it, and the mist of the clouds alone and unassisted would be insufficient. Secondly, if the last-named gas, hydrogen, had been heavier than atmospheric air, so as to seek the lowest situation, this would not have relieved us, because plants and water would not absorb it; and on the surface of the ground, the electric fluid does not play so as to dash it into the shape of water.

Reader, we have noticed some ten or twelve of those arrangements, without which the world could not continue the habitation of man. The Christian believes these things were wisely and kindly planned. The atheist thinks them fortuitous. The next truth important in this discussion, and which stands out before you is, that these facts and necessary circumstances belong to every thing you see; you cannot point at a visible object, you cannot think of a tangible substance on the face of the earth, that is not surrounded with laws or properties without which the comfort or the safety of the earth would sink. It is important that you should be familiar with this truth. We will ask your attention to it again, after we shall have noticed a few more examples of what we have been considering.

OTHER EXAMPLES OF CASUALTIES, OR OF MERCIES. There was a man who walked into his harvest-field as the sun arose. As the day advanced, the heat increased intensely. If it had continued to increase as rapidly throughout the day as it did during the first four hours, that man with his neighbors would have been withered to death. Young reader, you can un-

derstand the reason why the inhabitants of the earth are not destroyed every warm day.

If you will, in the middle of a sultry day, sprinkle water over the floor, you will find in a short time that it is gone, and the floor is dry. It has evaporated; that is, it has turned into mist and sailed away. This is the way the clouds are formed: the sun shines on the wet earth, the damp leaves; on lakes, rivers, oceans, and smaller streams—the water is converted into mist or cloud, which is so light that it rises and swims in the air.

You remember that while your floor was becoming dry, the room was rendered more cool—the air in the room parted with much of its heat. The reason of this is, that while water is turning into vapor, it absorbs much of the heat of the air around it; or in other words, while water evaporates, it absorbs or drinks up the heat or caloric near it. Now apply these facts. The day begins to grow warm, but there hang dew-drops on the grass, and as this water becomes mist it absorbs much heat, and thus checks the advancing warmth of the day. We should be scorched into cinders, but there are large oceans and many smaller collections of water, and as surely as water is heated, it will evaporate; and as certainly as it evaporates, it will use the heat nearest it, and we need not fear the sun in his upward march through a cloudless sky.

There was a man who left his field as the sun was sinking in the west. He looked over his crop in the month of June, and its green wave delighted his eye. The air grew colder as the night approached,

and still colder as it advanced, so as to render it certain that if the cold thus increased, before the night was over frost would be there, and would blacken all the hopes of the husbandman.

But the cold did not thus increase. May we not inquire why it did not? Would it not be stupidity to neglect such thoughts? Young reader, on the day before, to save us from an unfriendly heat, water had turned into mist and floated through the air, drinking up its superabundant warmth. At night, as it becomes more cold from the sun's absence, this mist goes back again into the form of water, giving out again all the heat it had before absorbed. It now hangs in dew-drops from the quivering leaf, and saves it from the frost. As surely as water seizes on the heat when it turns to mist, so certainly it gives it out again when it assumes the shape of dew. By these facts, little as they appear, our bodies are saved every summer's day from suffocating heat, in all its red intensity; and every cold autumnal night the sustenance of approaching months is sheltered from the blackening frost of winter.

The Christian who thinks over these things, feels that he is safe. He lays his hands across his breast, and with the smile of meek serenity he says, and he feels, "My Father is truly kind."

The atheist sits near a well-covered table, feeling more haughty as he fattens. He turns his broad, dull eye towards the throne of heaven, and says, "There is no God," and he feels, "*I* am wise."

Similar dangers threaten, and similar *providences*, or *accidents*, watch over us during every hour of winter.

December's sun disappears, and should the cold increase through the night as it does for the first few hours, we could not fancy the consequences. Nothing could save us Fuel and clothing could not protect us from freezing to death. The cold does not thus increase. Why does it not? Because the water in the earth, and on the earth, begins to freeze; and water as it freezes, or as it approaches a freezing state, gives out its caloric, that is, cold water is made colder by parting with the heat in it. As water freezes, the advancing cold is checked. The ocean gives up its heat throughout the whole of every winter. Earth could not be tenanted by man, if this were not the case.

There is another day in winter comparatively warm. This is called a *thaw.* We should suffer from unnatural and unseasonable heat, were it not for another diminutive, but momentous circumstance; that is, as snow melts and as ice dissolves, as frozen earth softens and as frost disappears, they all absorb the heat nearest them. The increasing warmth is thus abated for our entire safety. Reader, it is thus with every thing you see. On your right hand or on your left, above you or below, the smallest object on which your eye may rest is encircled by wise laws. If altered, the world would be destroyed. We can see no end to these kind contrivances; volumes could not detail them, for they are numerous as the objects of creation. Reader, we will not detain you here much longer. We would not pursue this part of our subject any further, were it not for the purpose of holding out a few more examples to show that the earth could not

continue as it now is, if any thing you look at were—had happened to be—made *different* in any way.

A FEW MORE EXAMPLES. You remember that some things mix with water very reluctantly, and others with great rapidity. If you will take sulphur and water and bring them together, you will find them commingle with great difficulty. If you will place water and sugar in the same vessel, you will find they unite at once. The soil you walk on every day is like neither of these substances named. Its aptitude to mix with water is of a middle cast. There are three things over which we have reason to rejoice; those who think not on them, have the sin either of ingratitude or stupidity. Let us look at them in order.

1. If the earth we cultivate had chanced to receive water into its embrace as slowly as that sulphur, our showers would rush from our hills and swell our streams, but they would never reach the roots of our corn, and famine would unpeople the earth.

2. If our soil should unite with water as water does with sugar or other substances, you would not dare step from your door after it had rained; you would sink in the mire of your yard. You could not plough your field. The vivifying shower would be an incurable calamity.

3. If our soil should receive the water faster, or not so fast; if it should refuse to part with it, or part with it more speedily, we could not continue here. The consequences would destroy us.

But we cannot travel over all creation. We need not keep in this path longer. Look at any thing you please, and it will not do to alter it. If it has been

here from all eternity, then it is unspeakably fortunate that it chanced to be always as it is; for had it happened otherwise, we never could have lived here. Suppose you were to alter the density, the thickness, or consistency, or solidity of water or of air. Fancy the water of our earth more dense than it is, its transparency would disappear. It would hold in suspension, that is, floating through it, substances which would forbid us to drink. Diminish its density, and your vessels would sink, you yourself could not swim, and your streams you could not pass. Similar evils would attend us were we to alter the consistency of air, or wood, or metal.

The thinking Christian can look at nothing which does not remind him unceasingly that his Father plans for him attentively, and calls for a return of his affections.* The atheist never had a more lovely

* When the pious agriculturist holds his plough, or stands with his chain or his axe in his hand, how many thoughts may move his gratitude. Out of the thirty metals, one is capable of welding—it is iron. One other metal may be welded, but it is scarce, and never could be used for our domestic wants, if iron were removed from us. If iron had been made like lead, or silver, or zinc, or gold, incapable of welding, how could we make many things that are needed hourly? But that this metal of which our ploughs or saws are formed is susceptible of welding, would not avail us much were it scarce as almost every other. But iron may be dug from a thousand hills, thanks to our Father. However, it is still true, that plentiful as is the iron, and firmly as it may be made to hold to iron, yet it would do us little comparative good if, like lead, it lacked tenacity, toughness. But of the twenty-nine metals iron is,

1. More plentiful than all the rest.
2. It is more tenacious and durable.
3. It alone may be mended by the process of welding.

thought than this, "It happened well enough, and glory to myself, for I enjoy it."

THE SECOND PART OF THIS PICTURE. The atheist is not moved by any of the considerations that we have named. They make no impression on his mind. He looks at the mercies we have named, which are secured to us by what is termed the laws of nature, but he looks no further back than the law. He is like the man who saw a wheel revolve which accomplished much; he saw the work performed, but never looked beyond the wheel. He dreamed not of a more distant actor. At last being told that the wheel was moved, he did look more attentively, and saw another revolving wheel which moved the first. This he concluded was the author of the work, and never could be prevailed on to suppose the second wheel was also moved, for in the apartment where he stood he saw no other power or acting force. Not only atheists and half-way atheists, but millions of others, and even professors of religion, get to staring at laws, and speaking of laws, and thinking of laws of nature, until they forget the hand that moves the laws. They never think of the mind that planned the laws. Others do not use the word *law* so readily as the word *nature*. Whatever comes to pass, they call it the effort of *nature*. Whatever pleasing property belongs to any thing which advances their comfort or secures their safety, when they speak of it they say, *it is its nature*. In this expression they would be correct to a certain extent, were it not that they never see any further. NATURE is as far as their mental eyesight ever penetrates. Whatever meaning they attach to

the word nature or to the word laws, they weave that meaning into a broad curtain, and hang it up before them, or they cast it over every object in creation, so that if they see through it, the view is dim and discolored. But there is a way to tear their veil. The Christian or the thinking man may snatch it away, so that even the half atheist must see, or turn away from the view. The entirely abandoned by the Spirit of God will never see again. With them, an absurdity is easier of belief than a rational occurrence; a falsehood is a thousand times more captivating than the truth.

There are facts of endless extent, over which the song of *laws*, *laws*, *nature*, *nature*, cannot be sung. To these facts we now advert.

There are mercies and arrangements indispensable to our comfort or our earthly existence, in the production of which the rules of attraction and of motion, of adhesion and affinity, in all their ten thousand bearings, had no concern. To these we now turn in search of examples from the boundless mass.

BLESSINGS AND MERCIES NOT PRODUCED BY ANY OF THE PRINCIPLES CALLED THE LAWS OF NATURE. Young reader, there is a part of South America where it does not rain. Shall that beautiful region be without what is necessary to man's life? No, it has been cared for. If you will take the map of South America, you may discover that her loftiest mountains do not, like the mountains of other lands, run in the middle, or near the middle of the continent. The Andes run along the edge, almost, of the land. You have heard of the trade-winds. The Creator is kind to

the sailor. He fans his cheek as he blasphemes his name. The sailor could not cross the tropical seas if the winds were still or uncertain. But travellers tell us that these trade-winds, so important to those who go down to the sea in ships, carry the clouds in such a direction and with so much rapidity, that they are borne past a portion of South America. This kindness to a part of our race, or this conjoined with other causes, is the reason why the showers do not refresh the fields of another part. The Andes are much higher than our North American mountains, and there seems to be a good reason why we should rejoice at it. They rise above the common region of the clouds. It is said by those who have been there, that the winds bear the clouds against the sides of these mountains, which are too high for them to pass with facility. It is stated that the clouds are accumulated there, resulting in what might be termed an almost perpetual thunder-storm. It is said that the rivers are in a state of freshet, and are larger in proportion to their length, than our North American streams. The map says this to the eye. It is said that the sun beams on the slope of the Andes, the south-eastern slope, thirty or sixty miles broad and many hundred miles in length, dripping with incessant rains, until evaporation fills the air with mist. This floats off towards the otherwise arid provinces, and abundant *dews* water the fields. These abundant dews supply the place of rain. The green carpet is spread under the feet of the man who walks there. The fruit-bearing tree waves its beautiful branches over his head, but he never supposes for a moment that a

benevolent Contriver cared for his comfort. He thinks *nature* affords us food.

Before we make inferences, we will look at another portion of the earth where it does not rain. It does not rain in Egypt, and there is no mountain in the proper place to intercept the cloud, nor is there any current of passing clouds to be there condensed, even had the Andes lifted their heads along the shores of the Red sea. No cause, or combination of causes is found powerful enough to water plentifully the fields of Egypt, yet it has been called the granary of the world.

This is owing to a number of circumstances, out of which we will notice only four or five. 1. Egypt is unlike every or any other kingdom of which we have read, in being not level merely, but flat enough to be overflowed. 2. A river runs through the middle, large enough to flood a wide range of the earth's surface. 3. The mountains of the Moon invite the clouds, or a number of causes unite to produce the result. It rains there with sufficient profusion to swell a river high enough to cover a kingdom. The Nile rises in the mountains of the Moon. 4. The distance from where the Nile receives the rain to Egypt, is sufficiently protracted. It takes the flood several months to descend, so that the waters do not reach the fields where they are needed too soon, or at an improper season of the year. 5. The rains fall at the proper season of the year, and in sufficient abundance.

When we tell the atheist of the kindness of our Father, in causing the grain to grow that we may be

fed, he replies, that "nature supplies our wants," that "it is the nature of the soil and the shower to produce vegetation." It is according to what he calls "the laws of nature." Now, dear friend, you have mind enough, we have no doubt, to understand that if the atheist were to tell us of some law which produced the Andes, and reared them of a given height, we should desire to know why this law did not produce a similar mountain on the plains of Egypt? If any one could tell us how *nature* contrived to spread out the flat of Egypt to receive the coming flood, we must wonder why nature did not level the hills and mountains of South America. Why did not inundation answer on the coast of Chili, and dew upon the sands of Egypt?

When facts like these are brought before us—and the world is covered with them—there remains no other possible alternative but to say, "It happened that it never rains in Egypt. It chanced that the country was flat, it being the only country that needed to be thus outspread. The Andes ran in a fortunate direction, and they happened to be higher than our mountains, or they would not intercept the teeming cloud. The contingent rains, far up the Nile, chanced to fall at the season which just answers. Luckily, these rains do not fall as often as in other sections, or two overflowings might happen in a year, the last drowning the crop which the first had fostered," etc. You can begin to perceive what incredibilities the mind forsaken of divine influences can entertain. The earth is overspread with such things as we have been noticing. Then you may

begin to suspect that the train of enormous absurdities which the atheist must believe is endless.

We would not weary you with voluminous details, but we wish you to look fairly at the depravity of man. We must point you to similar illustrations and facts, such as we have endeavored to improve.

There is a region where the inhabitants cannot say, "It rains not on us," but they must say, "The timber grows not here." Greenland is without a forest. Do you ask, how are their habitations warmed in winter? Sailors tell us that train-oil is their fuel. But wood is wanting. Their houses must be covered; their spears and javelins must have handles. Without domestic or hunting utensils, boats or fishing-tackle, their homes cannot be tenanted; without wood these things cannot be made. Travellers tell us that a certain current of the ocean, or certain winds, or both united, bear along in a proper direction the once stately tree, and another and another with abundant constancy, and lodge the needed forest between the islands. There it remains until needed by those whom the Lord forgets not. The soil does not nourish the needed oak for their convenience, but the billow obeys his voice and bears it to them.

If you had no resource for fuel but *train-oil*, you could not get that, for the whale is ordered to swim nearest to those who most need his flesh. No trees are thus borne along the shores of France, or Spain, or England, or perhaps any other nation. They are not needed, but in the frozen climes. Where these trees are torn from, or how they are swept away, we

are not commonly told, and it matters not, so that the Greenlander fails not to receive his mercies. If other shores were naked, and forests waved not there, they would not be supplied as is this land of snow, for ocean's current is not freighted thus with trees, or it does not bear in the right direction, or the islands do not stand so as to form a storehouse for the timber. Reader, while looking at these facts, as they are scattered all over the earth, it is evident enough that our Parent designed it all in kindness. To believe otherwise requires an appetite for untruth that no man need covet.

While stating that these mind-exhibiting contrivances were scattered all over the earth, we scarcely crossed the threshold of reality. The train of thought-evincing facts stretches from world to world, and extends from star to star.

Reader, we will show that those who receive and love nonsense as extensive as the world we inhabit, do not stop at that achievement. Their credulity is capacious enough to swallow absurdities as broad as creation.

The truth-hater overcomes his difficulties, although they are as wide as the universe, and as numerous as the objects of which creation is composed. The scientific reader must allow us to depart at will from the language of astronomy, when speaking ot distant worlds, so as to be understood by the little boy or the unread investigator. We must address the child in the manner of children's converse.

Young reader, there are certain first principles which you must understand and keep in memory,

before you can profit by certain pleasing information. You are aware that the author of an almanac must know much of the sun, and moon, and other worlds, which you do not. He tells you of an eclipse many months or years before it takes place. He tells you to a minute when it will begin, how much of the sun or moon will be darkened, and when it will cease, etc. The reason he can do this is, he has looked through a telescope, and has found out the distance of the sun and of the moon, how large they are, etc. Astronomers can see through those glasses worlds which we cannot see with the naked eye; and they have discovered many facts concerning distant worlds, which seem strange to those who have not read, or who have not looked through the telescope. These are the astronomical facts which you are desired to mark attentively:

1. Our sun is many thousand times larger than the world we walk on.

2. Our earth flies entirely around the sun in one enormous circular sweep, once every year.

3. There are some worlds much nearer to our sun than we are, and flying around it. We must notice them one by one, beginning with the nearest.

First, there is a world smaller than our earth, a beautiful little world, which flies around the sun at the distance of almost forty millions of miles. This is much nearer the sun than we are. Astronomers have chosen to name this little world *Mercury*. It has no moon. It does not need one; because it is so close to the sun that it has many times the light and heat which we enjoy.

Secondly, if you will come some twenty millions of miles further from the sun, you will pass another beautiful world just about the size of the one we live on. It is the same that we see so often and call the evening star. Astronomers have named it *Venus.* It is more than sixty millions of miles from the sun. Although this is a great distance, yet it is nearer the sun than we are, and has more light without a moon than we have with one. It does not need a moon, and it has none.

Thirdly, the next world we come to is our earth. We are the third in order from the sun, and ninety-five millions of miles from that luminary. We have a moon, and it is of great service to us.

Fourthly,* if we pass on from the sun, almost four hundred millions of miles beyond where we are, we reach a world as large as fifteen hundred of our

* The smaller planets between us and Jupiter, we have passed over. The unread could not easily understand the facts which it would have been necessary to state concerning these worlds, had we mentioned them. A moon of any size near enough to Mars, would pull him from his orbit, and do him other incurable injury. But we have no doubt that by the density of his atmosphere, or in some other way, this want is made good. Astronomers believe that it is atmospheric consistence which has tinged with red, and thus given name to this world. As it regards the other four little worlds, we have reason, when we look at crossing orbits and other facts, to believe that two of these worlds were once but one; and that the other two were the satellites to this now exploded planet. This discussion we do not enter. It does not materially affect our inquiry, therefore we have passed it by. We have one *perhaps* to add in connection with another. Perhaps a world once rolled there, and was shivered. Perhaps its inhabitants forgot their God, and at last denied him, even his existence.

earth. This has been named *Jupiter*—almost five hundred millions of miles from the sun. It must need a moon indeed. It has four. But according to the laws of attraction, and the principles of astronomy, four large or serviceable moons would drag a world like ours to fearful ruin. The remedy is the size of Jupiter. This world, with so many moons, is—by chance?—so large and ponderous, that it moves on unwaveringly.

Some have avowed, and with reason on their side, that at a distance so enormous, even *four moons* cannot make up the want, and afford a supply of comforts such as we enjoy.

Others answer, that the nights of that world are never long. Each side of that cold planet is exposed to the face of the sun every four or five hours.

Fifthly, if we go from the sun nine hundred millions of miles, we come to a stupendous world, as large as a thousand of this; it has seven moons, and other contrivances are plainly visible, which must make up for want of light and heat that would be felt without them.

Sixthly, go from the sun eighteen hundred millions of miles, and we find a large and beautiful planet. Six moons have been seen, and how many more may be there, which distance renders invisible to us, we are unable to say. Also, what additional plans and arrangements are there furnishing a bountiful supply of heat and light, our short telescopes will not enable us to determine.

We must here pause and ask the reader to make one *deduction* from the few facts which we have

selected from the multitude. Before this conclusion is drawn, however, some items must be recalled to the reader's remembrance.

The atheist does not tell us of any *law of nature*, of any *attraction*, or natural tendency of things, which secured it from all eternity that Mercury should have no moon, or that we should have one. We never have heard, and never expect to hear, any other than two causes referred to as effecting these things. One is, that the kind Creator was also wise, and that he ordered seven moons to sail around Saturn, and only four around Jupiter, because Saturn was almost as far again from the sun as the other. The other cause is, that it has *happened* so always. It has been fortunately right from everlasting. The three last worlds mentioned did not *chance* to be smaller than they are.

The first three worlds named are not as large as the others. Had they been thus massive, they would have fallen into the sun, or their motions must have been increased, altering our seasons, and shortening them so as to require an endless train of changes throughout all the elements.

We have now glanced at fifteen or twenty items—*chances*, or *mercies*—any one of which, altered in any way, would destroy a world. The catalogue does not stop here. Millions and millions would not fill up the list. We only point to a few palpable illustrations, and we have not time to do more, even if the reader had patience to examine a long detail. We could not name a thousand on a page, much less specify a thousand facts. But what would a thousand be out

of the countless millions that exist in every direction? We have a few more examples to present, but must first mention the inference we have promised to request of the reader. The following inference we cannot ourselves avoid, and we ask the reader if his deductions from facts noticed are not the same.

INFERENCE. When we find a heart which loves any amount of falsehood, a credulity broader than a hundred oceans, a predilection for enormous untruth reaching across a thousand worlds, we must infer that, uninfluenced by the Spirit of eternal truth, man "loves darkness," and not the light.

A preference for darkness is depravity. If depraved, man is fallen, for the pure hand of his Sovereign made him not so at first.

MORE EXAMPLES. Reader, we would not proceed in this detail, were it not that we are all prone to forgetfulness where important truth is concerned.

We have told you that the train of mercies, which the atheist calls CHANCES, is endless. We desire not merely to state, but to impress it upon you. Dear reader, if you choose you may inquire after an astronomer's glass and look through it. You may see our sun and twenty-nine worlds, large enough to be inhabited, sailing round him. This makes thirty orbs which excite our wonder and employ our admiring gaze. We cannot write concerning thirty worlds, but we may notice one or two, to remind you that wisdom and goodness have been extended to the rest. We will look for a short time at the worlds nearest us, our own earth and its moon. Our moon flies round our earth at the distance of two hundred

and forty thousand miles. Its diameter is twenty-one hundred and eighty miles.

Some facts to be stated may be such as those who have never read astronomy understand with difficulty, but in these cases they may take the simple assertion of authors, because they are items concerning which Christians and unbelievers do not disagree. We cannot call attention to one fact in a million, but advert to a few, which will bring us once more to the inevitable conclusion.

1. The moon moves around us, flying from west to east: had it happened to move from north to south, we should have been two weeks without beholding her silver visage.

2. Had it chanced that the course of the moon's orbit had been from north to south, she would not shine on those living near the poles for fourteen days alternately.

3. If the moon had been placed at a greater distance from us, she would have appeared smaller, and her light would have shone more faintly.

4. If the moon were much nearer us than she now is, her light, in many of her phases, would shine more dimly, because, as it regards the sun's rays, the angle of reflection must thus be rendered more obtuse.

5. If the moon were much larger than it is, it would pull the earth from her proper orbit, unless an alteration in the earth's size and motion, reaching on to and requiring an alteration in every thing else, were accomplished.

6. The number of particulars in which we are

benefited by the ebbing and flowing of the tides, we shall not endeavor to enumerate. One advantage we must state. Water is kept pure by motion. The quiet pond stagnates and interrupts the health of those who live near it. The river putrefies not, for its current agitates and its constant rolling clarifies its waters. The lake is not only shaken by vehement winds, but its waters are unceasingly changed for a new supply. Evaporation diminishes, and tributary rivers supply the waste. The lakes are thus becoming new lakes without interruption or delay. The ocean is too deep to be thus changed; and although the storms which help to preserve the lake by agitation, do also shake the ocean, this alone does not seem to be entirely sufficient. The ocean, however, is salt and never entirely still. These two together secure its purity. But where the river meets the ocean, and the ocean meets the river, they mutually still each other. The extended promontory or the crooked shore often shelters the river's mouth from the wind, so that the water there is not only devoid of agitation from the river's current, which is impeded by the ocean's waters, but it is almost devoid of salt, just where the gale is kept off by the hills from shaking its quiet surface. Then shall the sluggish waters putrefy, diseases in proportion spread, and render the shores of our ocean scarcely habitable? **No**; the tides dash the waters up the river till they meet its current and roll them back again often enough to prevent the threatened stagnation.

The moon's attraction calls up our tides; let us then rejoice because we *chance* to have a moon

8 If the moon were nearer to us, it would increase the tide so as to overflow much of our beautiful and fertile shore.

9. If the moon were larger, this same serious evil must result. It would be a sad inconvenience indeed, were the waters elevated each day only a few feet higher.

10. If the moon were smaller, or if it were more distant, the tides would be so diminished as to answer little purpose.

11. If the axis of our earth had happened to be uninclined, only that portion of our globe could have been inhabited called the torrid zone, and there no change of season would have occurred.

12. If our earth's diurnal motion had been more rapid, shortening our night and day, much of our middle earth—the equatorial regions—would have been drowned continually by the elevated ocean.

13. If this rotary motion were more slow, the same deluge would ruin much of the region which we inhabit and that which is north of us.

Conclusion. Dear friend, is it necessary that we should continue to enumerate such facts? We know not where they would end. The catalogue has no termination on which the eye of man has ever rested. Volumes have been filled concerning similar arrangements visible on our earth, such that were they altered in any way, devastation and ruin must ensue. After these volumes were filled, it was seen that the thresh old was not passed. Only the introduction ever could be penned. After reminding you that those who contend that all these things have always been as they

now are, must believe that it is exceedingly fortunate that they were right and happily convenient from all eternity, we shall ask the reader a few important questions.

Question 1. What do you think of the condition of the soul which, rather than receive the truth revealed to us concerning a kind Father, and a wise and glorious Creator, will believe in a volume of happy accidents and fortunate occurrences, no matter whether they took place yesterday or always existed?

Question 2. If this volume is gathered from the surface of our earth, how much must it be increased if written concerning every one of the thirty worlds, save one, which move around our sun?

Question 3. What do you think of the condition of the soul which, rather than worship a kind Father and wise Creator, will devour thirty large volumes of nonsense, or believe in thirty endless catalogues of happy contingences, without which the world where they are seen could not exist?

Question 4. Take the telescope and look at the stars; you will find they are all suns. We have reason to be assured that many of them are many times larger than our sun. But if we were to conjecture concerning the number of worlds—guessing from analogy—cherished by each sun, it would not be an unfair supposition to say, "I will allow that each sun I see was not made in vain, or that it is not less useful than our own; therefore thirty worlds at least may float around each sun."

You may count, by the aid of the telescope, about

eighty millions of suns. Suppose we knew all the facts connected with these eighty millions of suns. Or suppose a volume for each of the thirty worlds connected with each sun, it would make a work having thirty times eighty millions of volumes; but this could not begin to describe creation. Astronomers tell us that if we could look over all the systems that exist, and then should all the stars and all the suns we can now look at be struck into annihilation, we could not miss them; we could not miss eighty millions of suns, any more than we could miss the removal of one green leaf, when from the mountain top we look over the verdure of a waving and endless forest.

Man never believes an endless number of volumes filled with innumerable absurdities, after the truth has been made plain before him, except in matters of religion. Man does not swallow falsehood with uniform avidity, except to get clear of the Bible or its purest precepts.

"Men love darkness rather than light." Love for darkness and disrelish for light is depravity.

If man is naturally unlovely, he has fallen; for he did not come impure from the hands of his Creator.

Impurity cannot enter heaven without alteration.

Postscript. Some in every age who had cast away the book of God, and who were walking, with their backs turned on ceaseless felicity, after Satan, have been known to turn, and to prize unending joy, and to inquire after regeneration.

We do not know but that some reader, after other

investigation, may make the most important of all inquiries, such as,

What is conversion?

What is a change of heart?

How is any one to become a Christian?

What is it to become a child of God?

How is any one to obtain the pardon of all his sins?

What is *coming to God?*

How are we to obtain the new birth?

Reader, the new birth, change of heart, conversion, regeneration, etc., all mean the same thing. They are all different expressions for the same transactions. This action or event we wish to place before you in few words, as soon as we ask you to observe a few prefatory truths.

Truth 1. It would not do for you, as an innocent man, to die for one condemned by our human law; for in taking out of life a just man, and leaving a bad man in it, the community is injured; but when Christ died for those heaven's law had condemned, he laid down his life and took it up again.

Truth 2. If Christ suffered for others, but did not suffer as much in the garden and on the cross as they deserve to suffer in hell, still, a full equivalent was offered in this sacrifice, because of the dignity of the individual who was bleeding.

Truth 3. If the Judge is willing to take the Calvary death, as a satisfaction for the divine law, in place of your death, you may very well be willing.

How to get religion. This conversion, designated by the expression, change of heart, new birth, and so

many different names, is to be obtained by *asking for it.* This is strange. Many will not believe it, the terms are so mild. We refer the reader to the Bible for confirmation of this statement. We will endeavor to explain *asking*—should it need explanation—as soon as the reader has looked at the Saviour's invitations in the blessed book. By searching there you will find that the Saviour is calling, "Come unto me," etc. He is declaring that applicants he will not "cast out." "Whosoever will, let him take," etc. "Ask, and ye shall receive," etc.

EXPLANATION. It does seem very strange, indeed, to speak of explaining what it is to ask for any thing. It is never necessary except in matters of true religion. It is true there, that men lean towards mistake, every step. Ministers talk of freely offered salvation, of God's willingness to receive penitents, etc., while their unconverted hearers misunderstand every word. The unconverted think, perhaps, that the change of heart is something exceedingly strange, which they are to wait for. Perhaps others fancy that they are to see light, or hear a voice, as Saul did; or they interpret every word concerning penitence, submission, forsaking the world, going to God, receiving pardon, etc., as having some strange metaphysical meaning. Others think that they must be distressed in mind so intensely, and suffer so extremely as to move the Lord's compassion; or they wait for this anguish, thinking that none apply properly but those in great mental agony.

Such kinds of mistakes, delusions, and erroneous interpretations, are so common and so uni-

versal, that it is necessary to explain the plainest things.

Asking God. 1. *The time.* It seems that he urges us speedily, for he always says *now*. This word *now*, being the only one used in reference to time, we infer that *expedition* is meant.

2. *The place.* That we may choose ourselves, for he is everywhere. He is always near to us, and can hear us whatever we say, so that place cannot be material. Some, when they go to ask for pardon and heaven, choose to be in secret and alone. Others do not wait for this.

3. *The manner.* The only way to ask acceptably with God, is to wish what you ask for. He does not love hypocrisy; and if any should tell him that they wish to be saved, and wish to be Christians, when they do not, they cannot deceive him, for he sees the heart.

Questions asked and answered. *Question* 1. How am I to know he will pardon, if I ask?

Answer. Go and read of him in the New Testament. After observing his kindness, and patience, and meekness, and compassion, and readiness to hear requests, you will begin to suppose that had you been there, offering a reasonable request, he would not have turned away from you; but if it had been a petition which he had told you to make, you would confidently expect his compliance. Now you have to recollect that he is unchangeable; he is as kind now as he then was; he is as ready to hear as he was; he has told you to ask for pardon, and He will not refuse you.

Question 2. How am I to know if I am sincere, if I ask in a proper manner?

Answer. You are sincere if you wish to quit sin. Those who wish to quit sin, *try;* those who wish to do right, to overcome sin, etc., ask God to help them to leave it. They are sorry when they fail, and try again; and when they fall into sin again, they are concerned the more, and make a stronger effort. In short, they wish to do every thing they find required in the Bible; and being sorry for every failure, they keep up a struggle and a warfare against sin.

Question 3. If I ask for the pardon of all my sins, and to be taken into the number of the children of God, and to have my name with the ransomed, how am I to know when it is done?

Answer. He has had it written down for your encouragement, that, if you ask, you shall not be refused. He had it written because he does not appear to sinners, and they will not hear his lips pronounce words on this subject. When you ask, wanting pardon, you have reason to believe that he does not refuse, because he says he will not.

Question 4. Am I to hear no whisper, or to have no strong indication, hear no voice, or have no singular impulse to let me know that my sins are blotted out?

Answer. No; Christ has made you no such promise. You will not see the angel that blots out your sins; you will not see the Saviour to inform you that it is done: "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Blessed are those who believe the Saviour's word as it stands on the page of

his book, as promptly as they would believe his word, if they had with him a personal interview.

Question 5. If I were to ask for the remission of all my sins, and were to believe that my words were regarded, and my transgressions blotted out, I should surely rejoice: might I thus take comfort?

Answer. If you ever believe Christ's real statement as it stands in the Bible, it will be *faith*, and joy is one concomitant of faith. There was one who once declared, that under a hope of recently pardoned sin, his predominant feeling was a desire *never to offend God again.* Such a wish is connected with repentance. It is often the strongest feeling observable at the time. Often, the sinner does never notice the goodness of God; and never has his attention turned towards that affecting kindness of the Saviour, until his own case brings it before him, and until a hope of pardon arouses his observation.

Farewell. Reader, if you believe that you *never sinned*, we bid you farewell in despair; for sin has benumbed your soul into a stupidity which is hopeless. If you know you are a sinner, seek pardon forthwith, for this is the only wise course. If you wish pardon, our farewell advice, as to the manner of seeking it, is to act just as you would do if you saw the Redeemer.

Without seeing the Saviour, ask as you would if you did see him; without hearing him speak, attend to his written words just as you would do if you heard him speak them. "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." Without seeing the white throne, before which we must certainly

stand in judgment, act as you will wish you had when you do see it: without seeing the bright glory of the peaceful abode, and the joyous features of the white-robed society, act as vigorously as the worth of such a residence should prompt: without looking down into the red atmosphere, where are thrown together "the fearful, and the unbelieving, and abominable, and murderers, and dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and all liars," act so as to avoid their company and their eternity. Farewell.

CHAPTER XLVI.

THE AUTHOR'S UNBELIEF—MEANS OF RESCUE.

One way to make plain the cure of infidelity, is to give examples of deliverance. Facts are not read with less interest from being presented as the lever by which other minds have been moved; and as the particulars of our own history can be given with more accuracy than others, the following may not be out of place.

Before entering upon the means of escape from unbelief, it is necessary to notice the mode of descending into that abyss.

My parents were professors of religion, with a plain education, but well informed in holy things. Firm, ardent, and unassuming, infidelity came not before their thoughts. It seemed to be their impression that entire unbelief very rarely existed, and that where it was avowed it could scarcely be sincere. I never remember to have heard the truth of inspiration questioned by mortal lips until the age of sixteen; when, having passed through the usual college course too hastily, I went to read medicine in Danville, Kentucky. As soon as I mixed with society, I of course entered the company of some who were admirers of the French philosophy. I was not as much with the world as others, but I heard them

speak occasionally. When talking of religion their feelings were always awake. They seemed to believe that in disregarding inspiration there was something peculiarly original and lofty. The sparkle of the eye, the curl of the lip, and the tone of voice, if interpreted, seemed to say that the rest of mankind were contemptible fools, but "we are not." Their remarks impressed me, but not deeply. That their sarcasms and jeers influenced me towards infidelity, was because men love darkness more than light; for their arguments were so destitute of *fact* for foundation, that ignorant as I was, I could sometimes see that they in reality favored the other side.

I had some longing after the character of *singular intellectual independence*, and some leaning towards the dignified mien; but I did not assume either as yet, for my habits of morality remained, and my reverence for superior age and deeper research. It was necessary that I should receive praise from some source, before all diffidence or modesty should be swallowed up in self-esteem. And this intoxicating poison was not wanting. After the expiration of three years, I became surgeon's mate, or second physician, to a regiment of Kentucky militia which wintered near the northern lakes. The approbation of many around me there, led me to feel as though I was one of the actors on life's wide stage. After this, as I frequented the wine-club or the card-party, reverence for the Bible diminished; and as my respect for holy precepts diminished, my sinful habits increased. Infidelity inclines us towards pride, festivity, and dissipation, while these engender infidelity.

Like two ponderous metallic globes hung together on the side of a declivity, they mutually assist each other down the steep, and the further they proceed, the greater is their momentum. After this I became first surgeon to a regiment of Tennessee troops which served at Mobile. There I became acquainted with many officers of the regular army, whose intimacy was not calculated to lead me towards God or heaven. During this time, and after this, all worldly success only injured me. It increased my haughtiness, or added to my means of profuse pecuniary expenditure. Revelry darkened the cloud that enveloped my soul, and of course I advanced rapidly in unbelief. In my race of infidelity I never reached entire atheism. I was what was called a deist. After a time I began to have moments of doubt whether or not God existed; and moving still onward, it was not long before those short seasons of atheism began to lengthen and to blacken—when I was mercifully arrested. The means of my escape employ our next attention.

CHAPTER XLVII.

MEANS OF RESCUE—FALSE STATEMENTS.

I HAD not been brought to embrace infidelity by perusing the writings of unbelievers. I had never read a volume of their productions. I knew that some of these authors were renowned for their literature, and distinguished for their talents. I felt strengthened in my creed by the recollection that *many of the great and intellectual* believed as I did. I might have asked myself the question, If I am an infidel without assistance, what shall I be when aided by the arguments of all those books? I was led, casually, to read a book whose author I knew stood at the head of the infidel army. The man with whom I boarded bought at auction Voltaire's Philosophical Dictionary, and cast it into his library. I read it, and some months after, not knowing but I might have been mistaken in my first impression, I read the work again. When I state different impressions made on me by this and other productions, in different months and years, I cannot be accurate as to date or order. I cannot vouch for time or priority, only that such and such influences were made on my mind by such and such arguments. I did not renounce infidelity at once. The struggle occupied many months.

I opened the volume already named, and read the remarks of the author on a verse where he quotes Solomon as speaking of wine sparkling in *the glass.* This he avowed could not have been written by Sol-

omon, for there was no glass, he said, in Solomon's day. My blood ran somewhat cold on reading this; but I had then read some history. I knew that Archimedes was said to burn the Roman fleet with burning-glasses, which no one thinks of disputing; and we have no more account of glass in the days of Archimedes, than we have in the days of Solomon. I knew that Voltaire knew this, and it was not through ignorance that he penned his assertions. I knew that the author knew that ten thousands of boys and ploughmen would read who would know nothing of the facts, and of course the statement of the Dictionary would appear to them plain and conclusive. I was aware that if I had known nothing of ancient history, this false position would have appeared to me an incontrovertible argument. How strikingly were my impressions of the unfairness of this author afterwards confirmed, by finding that the words quoted by him, "sa couleur brille dans *le verre*"—"it giveth its color in the cup," Proverbs 23:31—stand in the common French Bible, "sa couleur dans *la coupe*;" and that the word which he will have to be *glass*, is in the original Hebrew כּוֹס, kis, "a common cup, such as is used for drinking out of at meals," without the slightest implication that it was *glass*.

But I was compelled to feel, when standing in the infidel ranks, "We should not blind the uninformed. We surely should support our side by sound fact, and not by half-way lies. But this, perhaps, is merely a weak page of the author; I will read on and notice his masterly positions, and his unanswerable objections against the Bible."

CHAPTER XLVIII.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

I AT once opened the Philosophical Dictionary again, and my eye rested on an article concerning Potiphar, the captain of Pharaoh's guard, to whom Joseph was sold in Egypt. The author informed the reader that this captain was called a *eunuch*. He then added his witticisms concerning eunuchs, and the wife of this man whom he called such. This was the amount of his assault. As I closed the book, my feelings were not easily described. I knew that eunuchs were employed in king's palaces for so many centuries, as managers, directors, superintendents, etc., that it would be strange if the two words eunuch and officer, had not become in those days synonymous, so as to mean nearly the same thing, or so, at least, as to be used interchangeably. I knew that Hebrew scholars agreed among themselves in calling the words alike so far, that they were in ancient days used indiscriminately. The author of the Dictionary did not inform the reader of this, although his information extended to all such things. To the minds of the ten thousand times ten thousand untaught readers, I knew that the language of the learned author would appear to hold up the page of Moses to deserved ridicule; but I had reason to exclaim, "Our leaders should use fair argument, founded on truth and not quibble, and that quibble on falsehood. Surely we have actual

objections to offer against the Bible; why should we use lies, or trust in them? But surely these two articles were written at an unguarded hour, or at some unthinking moment of levity. It cannot be that the grey-headed philosopher made use of wilful perversion, or false painting continually. If he did, I am in bad company. I must see further into this matter. I must read again.

I read again, and what was my surprise to find every article of this description! I read on and on, and there was a seeming objection to the Scriptures, but to the unlearned only. That which was painful was, that these objections were mostly built upon a statement really false; and if a half-read youth could see its fallacy, then the learned writer could of course. He must have known its falsity at the time of writing. I then continued to read on until I passed through the book; and, in the entire volume, there was not a solitary article which was not a kind of ridicule, which proved nothing for our side; or a little castle erected on historic falsehoods, but of such a shape, that those who had never read a tolerable course of history, could not tell but they were truths. I knew that those who had made no more than one year's close perusal of ancient history, could detect these lies of my champion, the leader of the army of sceptics, as easily as a skilful judge of money can tell a counterfeit dollar from one that is genuine; yea, as readily as the naturalist can tell a goat from a sheep. The thought passed through my mind, that a good cause never did need a stream of falsehood to sustain it. I must ask myself, why resort to lies as

weapons, if ours is the right side in this controversy? It seemed strange, that in the Philosophical Dictionary, a book written by one so able and so famous, there should not be one fair argument, one truth unmixed with a lie. I could have felt more like retaining my infidelity, if there had been only a few positions based on historic fact, a few fair, truthful objections to the Bible amid the chapters of misrepresentation; but I could not find one. I looked over it again, and I could not find *one*. I knew that a mask might be so painted, that a child of one year old might take it for a human visage, but one more grown could not be thus deluded; and the maker of the mask, especially, would know that it was not a human face. Thus I was forced to remember, that the paintings of the great Voltaire would seem reality to the infants in history, while those more advanced could not be so deceived. But the most painful of all to the heart of the deist is, that the philosopher himself was not deceived, but knew his productions would blind the ignorant alone. I found that I must read on. Was it so in other authors, or in other writings of the same author? I continued to read, and I must give the reader other examples of what I found, that it may not appear either prejudice, exaggeration, or passion, when I state again, that I could find no seeming argument in any book advocating my system of unbelief, which any boy who had made a moderate research in history, could not see was a mixture of hatred and untruth.

CHAPTER XLIX.

SEEMING TRUTH, BUT ACTUAL FALSEHOOD.

After reading the Philosophical Dictionary, the inquiry presented itself, "May not something more able be found in other productions of this author, whose fame has reached around the earth? May he not have reserved his strongest weapons for other volumes and other times?" I opened another book and read. What was my surprise to find there the same spirit, the same manner, and the same texture of plausible falsehood and expert ridicule. I might present the reader with volumes of instances, but it is not expedient here. It is, however, necessary that a proper number of fair examples should be presented, to show what is meant by a mixture of untruth and irony. It is a matter of perfect indifference from what page these examples are taken, or from what author. I shall continue for a time to notice items from the author already before us; and I shall take such articles as come first to my recollection.

I read from the pen of this prince of philosophers, the following declaration: "Men saw Isaiah walking stark naked, in Jerusalem, in order to show that the king of Assyria would bring a crowd of captives out of Egypt and Ethiopia, who would not have any thing to cover their nakedness. Is it possible that a man could walk stark naked through Jerusalem without being punished by the civil power?"

What impression must this make on one who had opened the book in search of support in his system of infidelity? I had read the Bible and heard it read often, through necessity, when I was young. I knew that many who read this would think it true, and make their inferences without further examination; but I knew it false, and I knew that the author must have known its untruth. He knew that the man without arms was and is called *naked*, in a military sense. Armed troops, and naked troops, are terms in common use. Those who are not only despoiled of arms, but destitute of robes and upper garments, as slaves commonly are, were called naked. No one means by this, stark nakedness, except those who choose so to understand; and those who thus choose, have something in their hearts which so actuates them. I began to feel as though I was not to look for much support from those who had received Europe's applause. I did think it strange, that men of so great talent could not offer some argument of weight in their cause, and having truth for its basis.

I read again, in another place, "How could God promise them that immense tract of land, the country between the Euphrates and the river of Egypt, which the Jews never possessed?"

I was under the necessity of making the following remarks: "All that prevents this being argument is, that the Jews did possess it. Joshua did not conquer it, but David did. If others should choose to swallow lies without investigation, and build their whole creed upon them, it cannot make the same course safe for me. The objections of the greatest

man on earth must have a portion, at least, of truth in their composition, or I cannot receive them."

I read again, "How could God give them that little spot of Palestine for ever and ever, from which they have been driven so long a time since?"

I knew that the author of this question must have known that God had told the Israelites over and again, that if they disobeyed him, they should be driven away and scattered over all the earth. I knew that all who had read the Bible, had seen these promises were made conditionally; and I thought that my companions in unbelief ought to have honesty enough to confess that which they knew, even if it did favor the Bible.

I read again, "Among the Jews, a man might marry his sister." All I could say to this was, "Among the Jews, a man was forbidden to marry his sister." All the reason why my unbelief was not strengthened by this assertion was, that I felt there was some difference between a falsehood and the truth. I knew that if an instance could be produced where a Jew, contrary to their law, had married his sister, it would prove that this marriage was allowed among them, in the same way that a case of murder in America proves that murder is allowed with us. I began to feel startled for my creed and for my religious views, but I did not yet renounce them. I was an infidel still. The heart of man in these cases receives error readily, and relinquishes it slowly and reluctantly.

I continued to read, "It is said in the book of Joshua, that the Jews were circumcised in the wil-

derness." All the difference between this and fact is, that it is said in the book of Joshua, that the Jews were not circumcised in the wilderness. It is true, that upon this false assertion and others like it, a very ingenious infidel argument is based; but what influence was that to have upon one who had read? I read over the foundation to that very plausible inference once more. "It is said in the book of Joshua, that the Jews were circumcised in the wilderness." The following was the language of my feelings: "This would support the argument attempted against the Old Testament, only the opposite is asserted in the book of Joshua. Are these the kind of assertions which so many ten thousands are believing implicitly and repeating triumphantly, and upon which they build their entire belief? Out of the millions who applaud, and who cast away the Bible, do none of them pause and investigate?"

I began to see that things said against that book were certainly popular. I began to have some little discovery of the fact that able arguments in favor of inspiration were not read, or if read, not noticed or remembered, while such things as I have quoted were loved and applauded at once. I did not, however, know the reason of this: I saw something of the fact, but did not at that time suspect man's fallen nature of giving him more love for darkness than for light.

CHAPTER L.

SEEMING TRUTH, BUT ACTUAL FALSEHOOD.

I would not continue to place before the reader the cases of falsehood after falsehood, and perversion after perversion, were it not that it is scarcely credible to those who have never examined, that nations should have been turned away from Christianity by volumes of unmingled untruth. In order to make the impression of this fact as perfect as the naked truth deserves—the fact, that there is no one truthful statement from which an important argument is drawn, in any volume of Voltaire I have ever read, but every article is either partly or totally made up of falsehood—I must continue the presentation of instances longer, and until there is danger of these items becoming wearisome; then I shall turn to other authors of the same belief.

I read a page where the learned author concluded that the Jews were anthropophagi, cannibals, eaters of human flesh. The first argument which seemed to be presented in favor of this opinion was, that there had been cannibals in other parts of the world. This did not seem to me altogether conclusive. I read on until I came to the most commanding proof given by the philosopher, that the Jews did indeed eat human flesh. This he gave by telling us that Ezekiel promised them the flesh of horses, and of captains, and of mighty men; and if they were prom-

ised the flesh, no doubt it was that they might eat it, etc. I knew that this might be read and believed by myriads who never would take the trouble to read the prophet referred to—by thousands who would rejoice in it without consulting the Bible; but as for myself, I had read it when a boy. I knew that the call and the invitation by the mouth of Ezekiel, was to the birds of the air and carnivorous animals of the forest. They were told that they might eat the flesh of horses, and the flesh of their riders! I felt that if the prophet were ordered to declare the approach of a bloody battle, and in order to impress all hearers with the amount of the threatened devastation, was directed to call upon ravenous beasts and birds to come and fill themselves, it was a low kind of lying to tell those who never read, that the call was to *men* to come and fill themselves. I did not think it any more excusable because there were millions who were reading and joyfully adopting all such statements, without ever reading the prophets, or a sentence penned by any one in their favor. Still, this was the kind, and the only kind of reasoning written by any one, as far as I could discover, who had received admiration and applause beyond measure. I thought that if I could find nothing stronger among reputed giants, I should be under the necessity of reviewing my system, and noticing once more the objections which I myself had fabricated against holy writ, lest they should resemble in some respects those which I was reading in the works of my infidel brethren.

CHAPTER LI.

SEEMING TRUTH, BUT ACTUAL FALSEHOOD.

About this time, when passing from place to place, it was no uncommon night's occurrence to meet a circle around the tavern fire, and before the evening passed to hear remarks on Christianity.

I listened, and the objections were all of the same class of those I had been reading, or weaker. It is strange that I should have remained an unbeliever; but as yet, I was only sufficiently shaken to cause me to read, inquire, and listen. I observed that those who hissed at the Bible were very impatient, if any one on the opposite side crossed them in argument. Even when talking with each other, their eyes flashed, and the countenance assumed an expression singularly vindictive. Others, again, chose irony for their weapon, and laughed aloud where others were not always able to discover any thing indubitably jocular. But that which gave me most pain, was that which I met so frequently, and which occurred almost hourly, from day to day. I saw those who assumed the lordly look, as soon as the subject was mentioned. They put on the consequential air of high authority, and with the tone of emphatic decision they pronounced others more than idiots, while at the time it was evident that they did not know Alexander the Great from Alexander the coppersmith. It was true of the most positive and the most over-

bearing in this controversy, that they were unacquainted with all ancient history, and would not know Peter the apostle from Peter the hermit, had you seriously tested the matter by particular examination. I was not surprised that men should be uninformed. That this was so with most of our race was no new discovery. Being ignorant myself to my own consciousness, I was not disposed to judge harshly of a man merely because he did not possess knowledge. I must have included myself in the same condemnation, had I spoken severely of the uninformed; but that those who had never read a hundred volumes of any thing, should so confidently and so repeatedly sneer at the learned, and the grey-headed, and the meek, who had been toiling in a fifty years' research, began to make me suspect that men hated Christianity with a spontaneous and a special dislike. I did not hear the ploughman deciding, with oaths, sarcasm, and vehemence, in matters of navigation, wherein he was totally ignorant. I did not hear the apprentice-boy pronouncing all who did not hold his theory of astronomy deluded or hypocritical.

I doubted whether in any thing, religion excepted, men would so generally decide so quickly and so haughtily, while they were uninformed.

After the most common order of objections against the Bible began to grow somewhat old and worn, a new class of jeers came into much-admired fashion. I will give an example from the multitude.

In different parts of the world where fuel is scarce, there have been those of the poorest class who were

in the habit of making a fire from dried manure and trash. This sun-dried manure did not only make a fire, but by such a fire their bread was often baked.

In order to apprize the Israelites of the poverty and wretchedness to which they were certainly to be reduced, Ezekiel was ordered to bake his bread with such fuel and eat it in their sight. This was perhaps all in vision, but this does not matter, nor alter the case, nor change the point we have in view. The learned of France and of America pretended to understand it, that the prophet was told to spread fresh manure on his bread and eat it. They wrote and so asserted it, again and again, for the perusal and the exultation of those who never would read the page of prophecy. They multiplied their joyous jests and their untiring witticisms on this favorite point, talking of the prophet's breakfast, of his sweetmeats, etc.

How much this pleasing and refined irony would have influenced me as I read it, I am unable to say; but unfortunately for my coadjutors, being the son of an old, praying man, who had compelled me to hear the book he loved read twice every day, I knew that all the merriment and all the jeering was founded on a lie, and I do not remember that I ever laughed in the midst of our hilarity. I had built what seemed to me walls between me and Christianity. I had my strong objections, as I thought them, such as will be mentioned after a time; but those arguments which would have been powerful, only that they started in lies naked to all who had read the Bible *thrice* with attention, gave me more pain than pleasure.

But this example of a fondness for filthy jesting

is not the whole truth. It does not reach the summit of entire fact. A kind of indecent jesting, still more indelicate, became much practised and more loved.

They would take some case of crime recorded in the Bible, some case of adultery or of fornication, and name it and repeat it, and place it in different attitudes with unusual delight. This was one more kind of warfare which did not fix my principles of infidelity. It rather rendered me more uneasy if I saw it settle the creed of others, for I knew well enough that the Bible nowhere enjoined adultery, praised incest, or recommended fornication. I remembered, that if the book had given us the history of faultless men, we should have pronounced it lies, because the volume says there are none such, and because it would have contradicted our observation of the human race. I also recollected, that if the history of individuals is given to us, we should prefer that the truth, and the whole truth, should be honestly narrated, rather than faults concealed and virtues extolled.

When I heard my companions of the hotel circle seize upon some case of unchastity, recorded to the disgrace of a patriarch perhaps, and besmear it all over with the pollutions of a filthy imagination, and love to dwell upon it, and speak as though this was what the writers wished to teach or what the Scriptures recommended, I could not but see that there was an unfairness there, which proved that the alleged filthiness existed in the *heart* of the jester, and not on the page of scripture history. Indeed, sometimes when I witnessed the self-esteem of my brethren in infi-

delity, their dictatorial puffing, united with ignorance visible to the unlearned, I could not help making secret and severe remarks upon them, for it was my day of haughty wickedness. I have said to myself in language yet more ungentle, that of which the following is the import: "Self-admiring worm, an expert man could frame in half an hour a more ingenious lie against any narrative that ever was written, than any which you are capable of repeating after the last one you heard talk."

Strange to tell, these discoveries, these facts, and even these feelings, had no further influence upon me than to strengthen my resolve to read further, and examine my old doubts with more accuracy.

CHAPTER LII.

MEANS OF RESCUE—VOLNEY'S RUINS

After I had gone through all the writings of the renowned Voltaire, I could not find one argument or position which was unmixed truth. Since then I have seen letters of certain Jews to Voltaire. I could not discover in them any evidence of a solitary misrepresentation. This proves to me that those who feel right do not *wilfully*, and of course do not *often* mistake. These Israelites, in writing to this great man, tell him that he took his thoughts from Bolingbroke, Morgan, Tindal, etc., who in their turn had copied them from others. It really did seem to me as though it was not on account of their weight or superior excellence, that we need suspect any one of originality who copies them. My disappointment was great, and my astonishment indescribable, to find writings which had revolutionized provinces or perhaps nations in their religious creed, destitute of truth and full of falsehood. Pure, lovely *truth*, art thou discarded? Is falsehood, black, ungainly falsehood, loved in place of truth? Only in matters of religion. The carnal mind loves darkness there, but in other things men prefer light.

I resolved to read the works of others of the renowned and of the talented; for perhaps it was in these books that I might find united in one lovely circle, strength, mildness, truth, candor, and philan-

thropy. I took hold of Volney's Ruin of Empires, most commonly and familiarly called Volney's Ruins. I had heard this work extolled long and loud, and I read it attentively. The style was excellent and the manner captivating; but that which was more pleasing still, was this—the profusion of bitter misstatement, that constant stream of malignant untruth in which I had been wading, was wanting here. The most of his text was truth, real truth. The impression made on my mind by this volume, I shall not be able to make the reader fairly comprehend without his passing through some previous course of explanation.

I think this can be made plain by relating the substance of an interview which took place between a minister of the gospel and an infidel. They held a long conversation on a point which cannot be overlooked or misunderstood, if one would understand Volney or his doctrines. This dialogue between the deist and the preacher cannot be given verbally, but only substantially. I can give very correctly the sentiment expressed on that occasion, but accuracy of words I cannot attempt, nor is it necessary. The substance of their conversation was as follows:

Deist. Another, and the strongest reason why I can never receive the religion you profess is, that it speaks of visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation. I have too much respect for my Creator to believe he will ever do this in any case.

Preacher. Perhaps you did not notice that the verse does not speak of visiting the *punishment* due

to the father upon the children. It is the *iniquity* of the fathers which God speaks of visiting upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

DEIST. I do not believe that he would visit any thing of the father's upon the child, in any way or in any shape. I have a higher esteem for my Maker than this would amount to. I do not believe it, and I will not believe it.

PREACHER. You do believe it, for you see it all around you every day and every hour, and you consent to it, and you approve of it.

DEIST. I do not understand you, sir.

PREACHER. You may understand if you will, for nothing is plainer in matter of fact. I knew a man, Mr. S——, who had one son, his only child. This man would not work. He would not humble himself to honest labor. He seemed to have an invincible aversion to bodily toil. Here his iniquity began, for the God of the Bible had ordered him to work. He must have food and raiment, and he frequented horseraces, and frequently made a considerable sum by betting. He would attend card-parties, and frequently filled his pockets from the losses of those less skilful than himself. In this way I knew him to spend nearly twenty years. His little son was very lively and healthful, and promisingly intellectual. As this active little boy grew up, he did not work any more than his father did, and no one expected he would. He loved best to go with his father from place to place, and from village to village. He mingled in different kinds of company, saw new faces continually, and all childish embarrassments wore away. He be-

came skilful in riding fleet horses and in different games. His father's character became his. No one expected it to be otherwise. It was easier to teach him a love for loose amusements than for toil. The tavern-house revel was more attractive for the youth of sixteen, than was the corn-field employment. But mark you, the father was not happy. Indolence opens the door to other vices. He lost the respect of his fellow-citizens. He loved intoxicating drinks; he became otherwise abandoned, and was miserable. His iniquity was punished much here in this life. But his son was unhappy too. His father's character descended to him. God has declared in the hearing of all parents, that it is not his plan to prevent it. He became a practiser of the same sins which his father had loved. He became unhappy in proportion to his guilt. The iniquity of the father descended to the son. He followed the same course of idleness and profligacy as closely as his features followed those of his father in expression. If this, sir, had been the only case where the character and the iniquity of the father had become the son's over again, it would overturn your attempt to be wiser or more amiable than Omnipotence. But you know of cases all around you, and they are all over the earth, where children take after their fathers in their vices, and of course suffer as their fathers suffered, in proportion to their guilt.

We will consider this case, when I have placed before you one of an opposite character. Mr. T——, whom you knew, was not poor; he possessed a valuable tract of land, and did not refuse to plough it.

He earned his bread from day to day, although the sweat dropped from his brow while obtaining it. He had no time to go to the horserace, for he would not neglect his harvest. You know how comfortable and quiet was all around him. He had the confidence of his relatives and friends. He seemed to be very happy. His sons all took after him. When not in the school-house, he had them in the field. They now work as hard as he did, and begin to be as much respected. The father's character and his peace have descended to them. You know very well that the father could have taught them idleness as easily as he taught them industry, and God would not have prevented it. There are singular cases of exception to be seen in the process of every common plan, but they prove nothing. God has promised seed-time and harvest, and we have it. A few unseasonable weeks, or a failure of harvest, does not disprove the assertion that we have harvest. Winter is a cold season, and a warm day in January does not disprove that truth. Summer is a warm season, and a cold day in June does not falsify the declaration. That father could have taught his sons habits of mirth and revelry, as easily as he taught them months of toil, and God would not have interfered. By refusing to interpose coercively, he visits the evils of the fathers upon their offspring. If that man who was punished at W——n Circuit court for stealing—his father was notoriously dishonest, and all his neighbors knew it—if that man had spoken as follows to the jury and to the judge, what would have been their reply? "Fellow-citizens, I cannot see how I am to blame for

stealing, for my father did so before me. I always loved it, and I always practised it. My father always preferred taking his neighbor's property to work, and I have only copied him. I cannot be to blame, for I was reared to dishonesty."

You know that the judge would not tell the jury to acquit because he had shown his father to be also guilty, and to be the cause of his son's unloveliness.

The murderer never is excused, even if his father practised it in his sight, so as to make him a murderer in heart from his earliest day. The iniquitous character of the father going down to the son and acting itself out there again, does not become more lovely because it was a garment worn before. Neither God nor man excuses it. God has warned parents in the hearing of heaven, earth, and hell, that this descent will take place, and the features of the soul be "visited" as certainly as the features of the body. I knew the father who, in habits of filthy debauch, had acquired disease which descended to his children, and they were born with feeble, unsound frames, incapable of meeting the hardships of life and suffering with every morning's sun. Why do you not pretend to have too high an opinion of your Creator to believe that diseases are "visited" to the third and fourth generation? Go and tell physicians that you do not believe them, when they assert that many diseases are hereditary, because you have a more exalted view of your Maker than to suppose he would make things thus. Poor, innocent child, groaning there on account of the father's licentious and detestable indulgences. You might speak very pathetically and very

zealously, and at last not be either as wise or as benevolent as the Creator, who has made things thus. But to go back again to moral disease, to that iniquity which does descend: when you know there are ten thousand cases all around you, where the son is more inclined to copy his father's vicious habits than to follow virtue; when you know that all who fall into evil practices suffer for their character more or less; and this visiting of the iniquity upon the children God has never altered since he said he would not; why be trying to be wise, and to look lofty, and to disbelieve that which you have seen every day of your life when you mingled with society?

The deist confessed that he had known idle fathers rear idle children, and that men dislike them for their worthlessness.

He confessed that he had known evil-tempered, jealous, or envious parents have families that felt as they did, and were considered unlovely and hateful, in proportion to the amount of malignity which they had copied of their parents. He confessed that it did not excuse the criminal in any court of justice on earth, to say that the murder, or the adultery, or whatever the crime might be, was copied of father or mother, who had acted it out before them. Finally, he confessed that if a father had succeeded in training a son in vice and hateful crime, so that this blackness of soul and monstrous deformity caused the suffering of its possessor for fifty years in this life, and then brought him to perish on a gibbet, perhaps it might forbid his joy in the next existence. On the same principle that if I may not take many thousand

pounds unfairly, I may not take a single penny; on this principle, if a certain amount of unloveliness acquired in a given way, may detract from the happiness, or cause the suffering of any one for half a century, it may do so much longer, for aught we know.

Now, reader, in the next chapter we have a certain application of this truth to make, which will prevent our misunderstanding each other when we look together on the ruins of empires.

CHAPTER LIII.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

THERE was a man living on the shore of lake Erie who taught his children that adultery might offend God, but fornication was not amiss in any way. His was a false religion. His children believed it and suffered for it. His sons looked with entire indifference upon the ruin of their sisters. They would bargain for the prostitution of any female relative, if money were to be realized by it. All the family were brought down near the level of brutes by such false tenets, for other parts of their character soon corresponded, and they suffered from their father's teaching, and that greatly, whether we think it proper or not that they should have been left thus far under his influence.

Reader, the Bible shows that you can teach your children a false religion, and succeed equally well in bringing them to adopt it, if you try. We know this is true from observation, because not one in the whole nation or tribe to which the man mentioned belonged, ever found any difficulty in training his family to the sin he practised.

There was a man at the foot of an Asiatic mountain, who taught his children that God was sometimes pleased with the sacrifice of a child, nay, that often nothing short of this would answer. In process of time his daughter had a little son, whom she loved, but she strangled him. The mother suffered,

and the child suffered. The iniquity belonging to the false tenets of this false religion descended, and was felt to the third and fourth generation. The Bible says that we may teach our families tenets equally iniquitous, if we try. Observation teaches the same, because a hundred families living around this man taught as he did, and none failed to rear their children in their own likeness. The God of heaven says, reader, that if we teach our children thus, he will let it take its course; and we believe he will, for he has in every nation since the world was made, visited the fathers' teaching in this way to distant generations.

APPLICATION. On reading Volney's Ruins, I discovered two main pillars supporting the whole superstructure.

1. The first great pillar which he shapes out is, *that a man is born a Christian, or he is born a Mohamedan, or he is born a Pagan.*

Now this is almost true: with some slight variation it is what the Bible taught several thousand years before the author of Ruins of Empires was born. I knew while I was reading, that if a child was born of Mohamedan parents, and these parents trained the child in religion, it would be a sincere follower of that prophet. I knew that the same was true of Paganism. I knew that a child born of Christian parents might be a sincere Christian, and was more ready to become such in proportion to his faithful training. But it is true that he is not as ready to become a sincere Christian as he is a sincere Pagan, or Mohamedan, because men prefer darkness to light; they have not that natural relish for Christianity

which they have for false religions. Mr. Volney's plainest *inference* I did not see so clearly. The amount of his inference or deduction seemed to be, that if any number of parents, at any time or place, might teach their families any amount of *false religion*, therefore there was no *true* religion. A large portion of his page was true. It was urging the same doctrine which Moses said Jehovah spoke aloud to the people from the top of Sinai, long ago. A small part of his text only seemed false. Some declare that the most dangerous falsehoods on earth are those presented in company with a large measure of truth. They say that poison by itself might be rejected, because of its bitter taste; but if presented in a large quantity of pleasant and healthful food, it may be taken. In this way a production having one part falsehood and nine parts truth, or correct principle, is very captivating. The truth quiets apprehension, and the lie is the salt to an appetite for darkness rather than light. Even where we do not love truth, we look around for a portion of it to keep the conscience calm. In short, I found the French philosopher urging protractedly that which I had read, or heard read from the Scriptures from infancy—like fathers, like children. I do not know what influence his work would have had on me if I had not from boyhood known this to be one of the Bible's principal doctrines, and one of God's prominent threatenings. I am inclined to believe, judging while observing others, that this book would have drawn me after its author with great attraction. As it was, it informed me of nothing new, and it gave me no prop for my

infidelity. I knew that if God existed, he must do right; that as sure as he existed he always had declined, or refused to interfere in any way, to prevent falsehood descending to the children of false teachers, and that this was what the Bible said he had declared he would do. I confessed to myself that I did not see any thing more strange in his saying he would do a thing, than in his actually doing it. I knew that, although sitting on a throne of omnipotence, he did not interpose, and he did permit the lies of the fathers to visit the children to the third and fourth generation, and there would have been no more harm in his saying that he would thus act, than in acting it. Having always been familiar with the fact that I could teach my child a false creed and an evil practice, if I chose, I was not so well prepared to adopt the rest as logical inference and fair deduction, that one creed was as true as another.

I thought that if the Maker of the world had said in his denunciatory threatenings, "If you do set fire to your house and your granaries, in your wanton madness, it shall not end with yourself, for your children shall suffer the gnawings of hunger to as many generations as are under your roof," it would have been only saying that which is fact; and I could not say that *therefore* one practice was as good as another, or that among all the different opinions concerning parental conduct, one was as correct as another.

I thought that if the Creator had said, "If you do paint your soul black, the minds of your children as far down as your influence reaches, shall be stained with the same falsehood," it would only have been

telling us what has been and still is; but I could not be certain that this proves that no one knows truth from falsehood, or correct principle from error.

2. The following is the amount of the other great principle which supported his system, namely, that all religions, as well as Christianity, present their prophets, their sacred books, their martyrs, and their miracles; and who is to decide between their claims? or in other words, we are not expected to decide between various and plausible claims, zealously and tumultuously attested. Does God expect every one to be a critical judge?

I thought there was something very forcible in this. I was ready to exclaim, I have some support here. I was only determined to examine it closely from this recollection—that a principle seemingly directed towards the mark of truth, sometimes varies from it the further it is pursued. Just so the man who aimed his rifle against the mark with perfect accuracy, and then varied it only the tenth part of an inch, could not perceive the difference unless he looked along the gun; but the further the false track for the ball was pursued, the wider was its variation from the proper course. I concluded to extend the essence of this second principle or pillar of our author's to other things, and notice the result. I did so, and I should still have been pleased, and should still have floated along smilingly on the current of the author's thoughts, had it not been for a few facts which I could neither persuade, nor cut, nor drag out of my way. These stubborn, ungainly, and anti-soporific facts I must reserve for the next chapter.

CHAPTER LIV.

MEANS OF RESCUE—COUNTERFEITS.

A MAN once handed me a piece of silver coin; it looked very bright and beautiful. One with whom I was about to exchange it, suspected its purity. This called for the judgment of others. Some pronounced it genuine; others called it counterfeit. At length it was taken to a man in whose judgment all confided, and found to be impure.

There was a school-teacher needed at a certain point, and one offered whose qualifications seemed to be sufficient. He was employed, and afterwards it became evident that his literary pretensions were all unfounded, and the community suffered because they were not better judges in the first instance. Some had pronounced him incompetent at once, but others he deceived.

A poor man became possessed of a large bank-note. It looked well in his eye, but it was spurious. His children felt the loss which he sustained by being overreached. When he thought or when he conversed on the subject, he remembered or he heard the following sentiments, namely, that things most precious are most counterfeited; and that of course our interest in every thing is threatened in proportion to its value, from art or deception. Secondly, in every case under the sun we decide for ourselves, and if we judge incorrectly we take the consequences.

There was a man who appeared to be one of

worth and of modesty. He solicited the hand of a young female in marriage. Some told her that they believed him to be destitute of principle, and that his seeming virtues were all counterfeits. Her parents judged differently, and she thought differently. She became his, and lost her property, and her health, and her peace, to the last item of each. To see her sink, blighted all the earthly enjoyments of her parents.

The following are the plain facts which I have mentioned as standing in my way:

1. *We are acquainted with nothing valuable which has not its counterfeits.* We might offer a reward to any one who would point us to an exception. We know that all the virtues, and all the correct sentiments or doctrines, together with every excellent trait of character or lovely grace, may be counterfeited; therefore piety, or true religion, cannot be made a solitary exception, for it is made up of correct principles, lovely doctrines, and lovely graces or traits of character. If any religion should actually point us to a life which would not close, and to pleasures without a defect, I should call it more valuable than much wealth.

2. The counterfeit often appears, to the incompetent, brighter and more captivating than the genuine original.

3. We are called upon to struggle for qualifications to decide, and to aim after superior judgment, in proportion as our interest is threatened, and in accordance with the value of the thing presented. No one can become skilled in any branch of useful knowledge, without thought, industry, and research.

The acquisition of that which is most valuable, generally calls for most toil. The same benevolence which gave iron for our use, planned that we should dig it from the hills. The same kindness which formed the grains for our table, determined that we should rake the fields in the sun, before our bodies were thus nourished. To judge ably of things exceedingly valuable is worth uncommon industry.

4. Men never complain of any thing being liable to counterfeit pretensions, religion excepted; and they never complain of the necessity of their exertions to qualify themselves for judging between truth and falsehood in any case but in that of religious truth.

5. Men never say that because it is difficult to tell false gold or silver from the genuine coin, therefore they will cast all away; though thousands and millions are poor judges in such cases, from want of attention.

6. Men do not say that there is no such thing as honor, or probity, or modesty, or benevolence, or sensibility, because such things may be skilfully counterfeited, so as to call for judgment and experience to detect the falsehood.

7. We might make out a very pathetic case, of thousands of the youthful and inexperienced who had little opportunity to become judicious, and were liable to imposition every hour, and in connection with every coin and every character which could be named. We might say that we did not believe that our Creator would leave these unskilful creatures of his, to be liable to the loss of every earthly

blessing every hour, and even to the loss of that life which his own kind hand had bestowed. We might declaim with marvellous wisdom, and apparent sensibility, yet it would not alter the case in any respect: he has made the millions around us as we see them exposed, and calls to them for action.

Application. After observing that God had made every thing which I had ever noticed, liable to false pretensions, and had called upon me to learn, and to improve, and to act wisely in all life's pursuits, I was afraid he had done so in one more instance; and if exertion were necessary to obtain knowledge by which earthly blessings might be acquired or retained, then it might be necessary where things of still greater value were at stake. Perhaps the Creator might be so consistent, that a train of uniformity could be seen to run through all his works.

These and similar facts, with their collateral truths and unavoidable deductions, caused me to lay down the volume of the Ruins of Empires, unquieted and unsupported. Indeed, I felt much more restless when, upon looking down into his notes at the bottom of his page for historic references, I there found again, falsehoods unalloyed with other material, and these untruths of the most notorious kind and of the most malignant texture. I was indeed discouraged, as these facts thus influenced me; and, since the controversy has been settled in my mind, I have made certain discoveries, and here is the proper place for their introduction.

CHAPTER LV.

COUNTERFEITS CONTINUED.

I ASKED a man on the bank of the Illinois river, a swearing, Sabbath-hating man from New England, something concerning his observance of Bible precepts. He raised his broad face with a satisfied grin, and asked me which Bible. He stated that the Mormons had a Bible, and that being a poor, illiterate man, he was unable to decide which was the word of God. The exultation within him seemed to say, "I have at last found out how to cast away that thirty years of preaching which I was compelled to hear in the land of the pilgrims."

The following are some of the facts which I was able to see plainly before me at that time.

1. This man is very capable, when it is necessary to distinguish between a valuable horse and one that is inferior. He can tell a dollar of real silver from one of copper, only plated with silver, as speedily as many a chemist.

2. He is a better judge of a good or a bad bargain than many of the most able arithmeticians of the nation. It would be easier to cheat many a profound mathematician than to overreach *him*. He has labored to qualify himself in many things, and has succeeded so far that his knowledge in these matters surpasses that of millions of his race.

3. He has not striven to acquaint himself with the

Bible; for, although reared in a land of Bibles and of schools, he is not able to tell the most common incidents on the holy page. Of the chronology of scriptural events, he is perfectly ignorant He does not know whether Abraham or Cyrus of Persia lived first. You might tell him that Pilate and Cesar were Israelites, and he would know no better.

4. If he had put forth one half of the vigorous research after Bible knowledge, which he has expended after skill in gainful pursuits, he would not have been ignorant; yet his ignorance is now his excuse why he is unable to judge concerning revelation.

If we were to receive a kind letter from some powerful earthly monarch, some splendid king, making us many very rich offers, and proposing to us honor and wealth, telling the terms over and over, that we might not mistake, it would be expected of us that we should inform ourselves perfectly as to who brought it, its contents, its authenticity, etc. If we were to have it a full year, and never read it at all, it would be deemed strange indeed.

5. Most unbelievers, like this man, do not know one fortieth part of the great King's letter, nor one fortieth part of the evidence of its genuineness, nor one fortieth part of its beauties, its grandeur, its proposals, promises, or threatenings; while one half the time they waste in wickedness, or at least in nonsense and frivolity, would be enough to furnish them with that knowledge the want of which aids in their ruin.

Finally, the decisive characteristics and distin-

guishing marks between the true and false religions in the world, are more numerous and more notorious than are the marks between counterfeit coin and pure gold or silver; yet men become judges in the last case, and remain uninformed in the other.

If a young man were to hold up an article formed of brass, but made to resemble gold, and were to exclaim, "I can see but little difference between this and gold; I do not know that there is any: this seems as bright, and as smooth, and as beautiful as any I have seen;" his friends would tell him that there was a difference between pure and pretended gold—that they were to be distinguished by the sight, and by the ring, and by trial or chemical tests. They would tell him that unless he would inform himself in this matter, he must suffer; but that by noting two or three signs scrupulously, he might decide without danger.

A FEW SIGNS IN RELIGION.

1. True miracles are usually performed in the presence of enemies and haters of the religion about to be introduced, while false miracles are only pretended to be done in the company of the friends of the system upheld.

2. True miracles are performed year after year so as to call the attention of all, and before the eyes of vast crowds of opposers; while the opposite of this belongs to pretension.

3. True miracles reach all the diseases to which the human frame is liable, not touching those only which frequently disappear of themselves and suddenly, and

also extend to every variety of influence upon all visible matter; while counterfeit marvels command alone those things which often, with a spontaneous impulse, transpire of themselves. The same difference exists that there is between commanding fire to devour fifty men, or the sun to stand still, or the man born blind to see at once, or the lame one instantly to leap, and the art of charming the headache into ease, the agitated nerves into tranquillity, or commanding the internal and visible disorder to disappear.

4. A system of truth sent from heaven always forbids what man is much inclined to love; forbids sensual indulgence, fraud, wickedness, injustice, impurity, revenge, hatred, feasting, revelry, and all that man by nature is prone to reach after. The Koran allows of many wives, of revenge, and unending or exterminating war. The pagan creeds enjoin or permit gluttony, intoxication, and sensuality of every kind, to any possible extent.

5. God's revelation orders the doing of that which men do not love. A wicked man would rather go through days of painful toil than to hold prayer in his own house, or to spend one hour in heart devotion. It requires a change of soul, and promises a paradise of holiness. The false volumes claiming to be from heaven, ask for no regeneration or holiness of heart, and promise a futurity of carnal indulgence and satiated appetites.

6. A true prophet is not applauded by a majority of the wicked, or by the mass of the depraved. He is generally disliked by those furthest from God, and spoken evil of by those who sink deepest in sin. He

is often not only reviled, but put to death if the laws permit; but the false prophet is neither stoned nor sawn asunder. He is often extolled greatly by the most dissolute, and is at least tolerated or praised to some extent by the leaders in depravity or the officers of sin.

Amidst the many marks or evident distinctions between true and false religion, we have not room here to notice more than one, and this may only be named and not dwelt upon at large. This last one is the *test.* In detecting false gold or marking pure, *the chemical test* deceives no one. The trial of the pure religion never fails those who test it by actual experiment. No other evidence is wanting; but it is hard to prevail on those who hate it to make this trial, to obey its precepts.

CHAPTER LVI.

FURTHER INQUIRY.

After laying down the book called Volney's Ruins, more doubtful of the strength of my own army than I had ever been, I asked after Paine's Age of Reason, having heard of its making much noise and stir in the world. I read it through and laid it aside, and I must not detain the reader by giving a protracted history of its contents.

The reader will scarcely believe me, or he will esteem me as having deserted the infidel ranks before I read it, if I tell him fully the impression it made on me. If the reader has pursued a course of ancient history, or will go and do it, or will look into the remarks of Bishop Watson in his volume called "An Apology," he will be able to understand me when I tell him that the writings of Paine drove me further from his belief than I had ever been. I certainly expected to find something excellent in a book which had caused tens of thousands to desert their faith, and millions to clap their hands. I read it, and I could not say that I found in it either suavity or philanthropy, dignity or sublimity, honesty or truth, but the opposite of them all—the opposite, although the writer was a man of talents; what then must his subject be, or the side which he failed to sustain? I was ready to exclaim, "If this moves the multitude, then what may not move them? If this

pleases them, then they must surely love the side they advocate. If they are thus easily pleased, then it is with that for which they surely have a natural relish."

I determined that I would read some on the opposite side, and that I would also at the same time take a more thinking review of my own objections to the religion of Christ. I inquired after a Bible which might have Christian notes in it. An old lady lent me hers, which I had often seen her poring over hours at a time. From her cast of mind I knew that in the work there must be thought, or she could not be thus engaged. It was Scott's Family Bible. In the year 1818 some copies had found their way to the forests of Tennessee.

I read the Bible with Scott's notes. My objections to the holy book, which were based upon my ignorance, disappeared as soon as I was informed. Before I describe this influence upon my mind, I must notice the sophism which was used to keep me from reading it, and which is still urged by many of Satan's able assistants, in many parts of the world, to keep others from reading commentaries on the Bible. "Read for yourself," they exclaim; "judge for yourself. Do not permit others to impose their belief upon you."

The danger of this sophistry is that which renders every other position which has peril in it dangerous. It is half truth and half falsehood. The truthful, and therefore imposing part, is, that we never should copy the thoughts of others with neutral servility, so as to let others judge for us. The erroneous

part consists in this, that it seems to teach as though we could not avail ourselves of the labors of others without adopting their judgment. The truth is, we may avail ourselves of their toils without following their peculiar notions. We may make profitable use of their researches without adopting their ideas in the room of our own. We can use forty years' toil of another, and judge for ourselves all the time. This is done in every thing. When the little boy, or an unlettered Indian savage, asks his teacher concerning the component parts of gunpowder, their number and character, he can explain the whole to him in ten minutes. If he were to tell him, "There is the powder; take it, look for yourself, examine for yourself, do not let others think for you;" it might require years of investigation to discover that which a few minutes' explanation could teach; and facts would so corroborate the statement, that it might be seen at once to be true. A commentator may remind us of a point of history which elucidates a chapter of holy writ, which history we may have known before, but never thought of applying; or if not known before, we may look into the proper volume and be informed of its correctness; while, although so important, we never should have thought of its use, had it not been for the labors of our author. Just so a man may show and explain to us a valuable piece of machinery, and as soon as he points out the main parts and explains their use, we see it at once, but we are judging for ourselves all the time; although, were it not for his instructions, it would take us a long time to make each discovery. A commentator tells of one or

two verses in different parts of the Bible which explain fully the one we are reading. We look at these and find it so, and feel that it is perfectly satisfactory, judging for ourselves; although we might not have known of their existence or remembered seeing them, in years of reading, had it not been for his assistance. I read an author on philosophy or chemistry, and he tells me of many things which instruct me, and I rejoice that his labors preceded mine; but if he advances theories which I cannot credit, I do not receive them. A commentator may give me an explanation of a passage which does not seem satisfactory, and I cast it aside; but when he refers to a certain verse of prophecy as describing a political event some centuries before it took place, I look at the verse, consult history, and compare dates, and rejoice that others toiled before me. I am in this way brought to examine that with close attention which I otherwise might have passed over without seeing for half a lifetime.

It does seem to be an object of moment with some invisible evil one, to prevent inquirers reading the Scriptures with notes, if we may judge from the uniformity with which unconverted men avoid it without any proper cause. Much of the information which they need, and which they might have acquired in the morning of life, they have neglected to seek, and the time is much spent, and too far past to recover. Unless they receive it now by the aid of others, they never will know the fourth part of it.

I never myself felt inclined to obey the counsel which said, "Do not read the opinions of others in matters of Scripture," for I never intended to take

the views of others in any thing, unless they appeared to me as correct, and then I was resolved not to be persuaded away or frightened from them. The desire to gratify the pride of originality should never keep us from being instructed, when that favor offers itself. After I had read Scott's Family Bible, I felt like reading it again. It is true that I was half driven from infidelity by the infidel authors. To find no aid, and no truth or loveliness where I had looked for it, inclined me to listen with more calmness and impartiality to the other side.

In Scott I found no controversy tinctured with smutty, indecent filth. I found no self-complacent ridicule, no coxcomical jeerings, no truth twisted, or mixed up with nine tenths of actual *untruth*. The difference between the two styles and the two modes is only known to those who have felt the sudden transition from one to the other. The unbelieving writers seemed unwilling to allow that the slightest lovely or commendable trait belonged to Moses, or Samuel, or Paul, or John, or any other good man. They seemed all more than ready to credit at once, and on any authority, any thing of such men. They seemed to have an appetite for attributing to them things the most enormous and inexpressibly hateful. I had heard, when very young, that this indicated the condition of heart belonging to the possessor, and invariably proved something to be amiss in his own bosom; but I did not see this so distinctly, and feel so sensibly that it was true, until I witnessed the way Scott wrote of his adversaries in debate and the haters of the system he loved. Although they might

be infidels, it appeared to me that he would have avoided telling a lie about them. I could not detect a wilful falsehood—shall I say, not one in a page?—no, not one in the whole work; for my life I could not. This made a strange impression upon me after the company I had been keeping. It seemed from the way he wrote, as though the salvation of infidels in heaven, or their preparation for it, would give him more exultation than it would to have the world believe a thousand slanders about them. This difference of temper between the advocates and the opposers of Christianity, made me more willing to read on; but it was what I afterwards discovered which settled me as on the rock of truth. While reading Scott, I found that some passages which had appeared darkness itself to me, were indeed full of instruction, of beauty, and of glory. I discovered that my infidelity had been based upon my ignorance, encircled with the love of sin, while its *practice* had beclouded and deformed my soul. Different parts of the sacred Scriptures which had appeared to me contradictory, or without meaning, were incontrovertibly shown to harmonize, and full of light to strengthen and support each other.

Let not the reader suppose that I could say undoubtingly, "I believe this book to be the Book of God," after it had been proved to me in different ways a hundred times. Physicians say of the body of man, that it may be formed into habits. They say of some intermittent fevers long continued, that the chill returns in accordance with the habits of the system. Many habits of the flesh run on, even when opposed

by our enlightened wishes. Habits of infidelity often exist when wishes militate, and after an instructed judgment tells us better. The feeling of my heart made it necessary that I should continue to read, after I could say in truth concerning the Bible, "I have more evidence a hundred-fold that this is God's letter, than I have of any past occurrence which I did not see." In connection with Scott, I read Bonnet's Inquiries, Paley, Watson, Chalmers, etc., and was pleased and astonished to see them all evince the meekness, and modesty, and benevolent forbearance, which struck me in the author first named.

They all instructed me. This investigation went on for many months. The considerations which agitated my mind, raising or sinking it, swaying me to the right or left, while this reading and this research went on, shall be commenced in the next chapter. For the present I wish to say to the Christian reader, for the unbeliever could not understand me—I wish to say, in the language of another, that which no sinner ever deserved to have the privilege of saying—that which, if any ever deserved to have no permission to pronounce, I have thus deserved; but with my face in the dust, while a joy inexpressible fills my soul, I can say, "I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God; whom I shall see for myself, and mine eyes shall behold, and not another."

CHAPTER LVII.

RELIGIOUS BELIEF AT DEATH.

It does not seem a matter of moment where I begin in trying to present thoughts which passed through my mind, while asking whether or not the Scriptures were of God. At different times, and under various temperaments of soul, I meditated on many points which made on me a lasting impression. Sometimes they spurred me on to further thought, or to more industrious reading. Sometimes they seemed to declare that God had revealed his wishes to men. Whether or not these considerations will thus affect others, I cannot tell. In the narration it matters not, I repeat again, where I begin. I shall commence by repeating a few of my thoughts on death.

OBSERVATIONS ON MAN'S DEPARTURE.

While attending medical lectures at Philadelphia, I heard from the lady with whom I boarded an account of certain individuals who were dead, to all appearance, during the prevalence of the yellow-fever in that city, and yet recovered. The fact that they saw, or fancied they saw things in the world of spirits, awakened my curiosity.

She told me of one with whom she was acquainted, who was so confident of his discoveries that he had seemingly thought of little else afterwards, and it had then been twenty-four years. These things appeared philosophically strange to me, for the following reasons.

First, those who from bleeding or from any other cause reach a state of *syncope*, or the ordinary fainting condition, think not at all, or are unable to remember any mental action. When they recover, it appears either that the mind was suspended, or they were unable to recollect its operations. There are those who believe on either side of this question. Some contend for suspension; others deny it, but say we never can recall thoughts formed while the mind is in that state, for reasons not yet understood.

Secondly, those who in approaching death, reach the first state of insensibility and recover from it, are unconscious of any mental activity, and have no thoughts which they can recall.

Thirdly, if this is so, why then should those who had travelled further into the land of death, and had sunk deeper into the condition of bodily inaction, when recovered, be conscious of mental action, and remember thoughts more vivid than ever had flashed across their souls in the health of boyhood, under a vernal sun, and on a plain of flowers?

After this I felt somewhat inclined to watch, when it became my business year after year to stand by the bed of death. That which I saw was not calculated to protract and deepen the slumbers of infidelity, but rather to dispose towards a degree of restlessness, or, at least, to further observation. I knew that the circle of stupor, or insensibility, drawn around life, and through which all either pass or seem to pass who go out of life, was urged by some to prove that the mind could not exist unless it be in connection with organized matter. For the same

reason, others have contended that our souls must sleep until the morning of the resurrection, when we shall regain our bodies. That which I witnessed for myself pushed me, willing or unwilling, in a different direction. Before I relate these facts, I must offer something which may illustrate to a certain extent the thoughts towards which they pointed.

If we were to stand on the edge of a very deep ditch or gulf, on the distant verge of which a curtain hangs which obstructs the view, we might feel a wish to know what is beyond it, or whether there is any light in that unseen land. Suppose we were to let down a ladder, protracted greatly in its length, and ask a bold adventurer to descend and make discoveries. He goes to the bottom and then returns, telling us that there he could see nothing; that all was total darkness. We might very naturally infer the absence of light there; but if we concluded that his powers of vision had been annihilated, or that there could surely be no light in the land beyond the curtain, because, to reach that land, a very dark ravine must be crossed, it would have been weak reasoning; so much so, that, if it contented us, we must be easily satisfied. It gave me pain to notice many, nay, many physicians, who, on these very premises, or on something equally weak, were quieting themselves in the deduction that the soul sees no more after death. Suppose this adventurer descends again, and then ascends the other side so near the top that he can reach the curtain and slightly lift it. When he returns, he tells us that his vision had been suspended *totally* as before; but that he went nearer

the distant land, and it was revived again—that, as the curtain was lifted, he saw brighter light than he had ever seen before. We would say to him, "For a certain distance vision is suspended; but inaction is not loss of sight. Only travel on further, and you will see again." We can understand that any one might go to the bottom of that ravine a thousand times—he might remain there for days, and, if he went no further, he could tell on his return nothing of the unseen regions.

Something like this was illustrated by the facts noted during many years' employment in the medical profession. A few cases may be taken as examples.

I was called to see a female who departed under an influence which causes the patient to faint again and again, more and still more profoundly, until life is extinct. For the information of physicians, I mention, it was uterine hemorrhage from inseparably attached placenta. When recovered from the first condition of syncope, she appeared as unconscious, or as destitute of activity of spirit, as others usually do. She sunk again and revived; it was still the same. She fainted more profoundly still; and, when awake again, she appeared as others usually do who have no thoughts which they can recall. At length she appeared entirely gone. It did seem as though the struggle was for ever past. Her weeping relatives clasped their hands and exclaimed, "She is dead!" but, unexpectedly, she waked once more, and glancing her eyes on one who sat near, exclaimed, "Oh, Sarah, I was at an entirely new place!" and then sunk to remain insensible to the things of this world.

Why she, like others in fainting, should have no thoughts which she could recall, when not so near death as she afterwards was when she had thought, I could not clearly explain. Why her greatest activity of mind appeared to happen during her nearest approach to the future world, and while so near that from that stage scarcely any ever return who once reach it, seemed somewhat perplexing to me. I remembered that in the case recorded by Dr. Rush, where the man recovered who was to all appearance entirely dead, his activity of mind was unusual. He thought he heard and saw things unutterable. He did not know whether he was altogether dead or not. St. Paul says he was in a condition so near to death, that he could not tell whether he was out of the body or not; but that he heard things unutterable. I remembered that Tennant of New Jersey, and his friends, could not decide whether or not he had been out of the body; but he appeared to be so some days, and thought his discoveries unutterable. The man who cuts his finger and faints, recovering speedily, has no thoughts, or remembers none; he does not approach the distant edge of the ravine. These facts appeared to me poorly calculated to advance the philosophical importance of one who has discovered from sleep, or from syncope, that there is no other existence because this is all which we have seen. They appeared to me rather poorly calculated to promote the tranquillity of one seeking the comforts of atheism. For my own part, I never did desire the consolations of everlasting nothingness; I never could covet a plunge beneath the black wave of eternal for

getfulness, and cannot say that these observations in and of themselves gave me pain. But it was evident that thousands of the scientific were influenced by the weight of a small pebble to adopt a creed, provided that creed contradicted holy writ. I had read and heard too much of man's depravity and of his love for darkness, not to see that it militated against my system of deism, if it should appear that the otherwise learned should neglect to observe, or if observant, should be satisfied with the most superficial view, and seizing some shallow and questionable facts, build hastily upon them a fabric for eternity.

In the cases of those who, recovering from yellow-fever, thought they had enjoyed intercourse with the world of spirits, they were individuals who had appeared to be dead.

The following fact took place in recent days. Similar occurrences impressed me during years of observation. In the city of St. Louis, a female departed who had a rich portion of the comforts of Christianity. It was after some kind of spasm that was strong enough to have been the death struggle, that she said in a whisper, being unable to speak aloud, to her young pastor, "I had a sight of home, and I saw my Saviour."

There were others who, after wading as far as that which seemed to be the middle of the river, and returning, thought they had seen a different world, and that they had had an antepast of hell. But these cases we pass over; and, in the next chapter, look at facts which point along the same road we have been travelling.

CHAPTER LVIII

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

I WAS surprised to find that the condition of mind in the case of those who were dying, and of those who only *thought* themselves dying, differed very widely. I had supposed that the joy or the grief of death originated from the fancy of the patient, one supposing himself very near to great happiness, and the other expecting speedy suffering. My discoveries seemed to overturn this theory. Why should not the professor of religion who believes himself dying when he really is not, rejoice as readily as when he *is* departing, if his joy is the offspring of expectation? Why should not the alarm of the scoffer who believes himself dying and is not, be as uniform and as decisive as when he is in the river, if it comes of fancied evil or cowardly terrors? The same questions I asked myself again and again. I have no doubt that there is some strange reason connected with our natural disrelish for truth, which causes so many physicians, after seeing such facts so often, never to observe them. During twenty years of observation, I found the state of the soul belonging to the dying was uniformly and materially unlike that of those who only supposed themselves departing. This is best made plain by noting cases which occurred.

1. There was a man who believed himself con

verted, and his friends, judging from his walk, hoped with him. He was seized with disease, and believed himself within a few paces of the gate of futurity. He felt no joy, his mind was dark and his soul clouded. His exercises were painful, and the opposite of every enjoyment. He was not dying. He recovered. He had not been in the death-stream. After this he was taken again. He believed himself dying, and he was not mistaken. All was peace, serenity, hope, triumph.

2. There was a man who mocked at holy things. He became seriously diseased, and supposed himself sinking into the death-slumber. He was not frightened. His fortitude and composure were his pride, and the boast of his friends. The undaunted firmness with which he could enter futurity was spoken of exultingly. It was a mistake. He was not in the condition of dissolution. His soul never had been on the line between two worlds. After this he was taken ill again. He supposed as before that he was entering the next state, and he really was; but his soul seemed to feel a different atmosphere. The horrors of these scenes have been often described, and are often seen. I need not endeavor to picture such a departure here. The only difficulty in which I was thrown by such cases was, "Why was he not thus agonized before, when he thought himself departing? Can it be possible that we can stand so precisely on the dividing line, that the gale from both this and the coming world may blow upon our cheek? Can we have a taste of the exercises of the next territory before we enter it?" When I attempted to account

for this on the simple ground of bravery and cowardice, I was met by the two following facts.

First, I have known those—the cases are not unfrequent—who were brave, who had stood unflinching in battle's whirlpool. They had resolved never to disgrace their system of unbelief by a trembling death. They had called to Christians in the tone of resolve, saying, "I can die as coolly as you can." I had seen those die from whom entire firmness might fairly be expected. I had heard groans, even if the teeth were clenched for fear of complaint, such as I never wish to hear again; and I had looked into countenances, such as I hope never to see again.

Again, I had seen cowards die. I had seen those depart who were naturally timid, who expected themselves to meet death with fright and alarm. I had heard such, as it were, sing before Jordan was half forded. I had seen faces where, palled as they were, I beheld more celestial triumph than I had ever witnessed anywhere else. In that voice there was a sweetness, and in that eye there was a glory, which I never could have fancied in the death-spasms, if I nad not been near.

CHAPTER LIX.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

The condition of the soul, when the death-stream is entered, is not the same with that which it often becomes when it is almost passed. The brave man who steps upon the ladder across the dark ravine, with eye undaunted and haughty spirit, changes fearfully, in many cases, when he comes near enough to the curtain to lift it. The Christian who goes down the ladder pale and disconsolate, oftentimes starts with exultation and tries to burst into a song when almost across.

Illustration. A revolutionary officer, wounded at the battle of Germantown, was praised for his patriotism. The war ended, but he continued still to fight, in a different way, under the banner of one whom he called the Captain of his salvation. The applause of man never made him too proud to talk of the Man of Calvary. The hurry of life's driving pursuits could not consume all his time, or make him forget to kneel by the side of his consort, in the circle of his children, and anticipate a happy meeting in a more quiet clime.

To abbreviate this history, his life was such that those who knew him believed, if any one ever did die happily, this man would be one of that class. I saw him when the time arrived. He said to those around him, "I am not as happy as I could wish, or as I had

expected. I cannot say that I distrust my Saviour, for I know in whom I have believed; but I have not that pleasing readiness to depart which I had looked for." This distressed his relatives beyond expression. His friends were greatly pained, for they had looked for triumph. His departure was very slow, and still his language was, "I have no exhilaration or delightful readiness in my travel." The weeping circle pressed around him. Another hour passed. His hands and his feet became entirely cold. The feeling of heart remained the same. Another hour passes, and his vision has grown dim, but the state of his soul is unchanged. His daughter seemed as though her body could not sustain her anguish of spirit, if her father should cross the valley before the cloud passed from his sun. Before his hearing vanished, she made an agreement with him that at any stage as he travelled on, if he had a discovery of advancing glory, or a foretaste of heavenly delight, he should give her a certain token with his hand; his hands he could still move, cold as they were. She sat holding his hand hour after hour. In addition to his sight, his hearing at length failed. After a time he appeared almost unconscious of any thing, and the obstructed breathing peculiar to death was advanced near its termination, when he gave the token to his pale, but now joyous daughter; and the expressive flash of exultation was seen to spread itself through the stiffening muscles of his face. When his child asked him to give a signal if he had any happy view of heavenly light, with the feelings and opinions I once owned I could have asked, "Do you suppose that the increase of the

death-chill will add to his happiness? Are you to expect, that as his eyesight leaves, and as his hearing becomes confused, and his breathing convulsed, and as he sinks into that cold, fainting, sickening condition of pallid death, his exultation is to commence?"

It did then commence. Then is the time when many who enter the dark valley cheerless, begin to see something that transports; but some are too low to tell of it, and their friends think they departed under a cloud, when they really did not. It is at this stage of the journey that the enemy of God, who started with look of defiance and words of pride, seems to meet with that which alters his views and expectations; but he cannot tell it, for his tongue can no longer move.

Those who inquire after and read the death of the wife of the celebrated John Newton, will find a very plain and very interesting instance where the Saviour seemed to meet with a smiling countenance his dying servant, when she had advanced too far to call back to her sorrowful friends, and tell them of the pleasing news.

CHAPTER LX.

THE SUBJECT CONTINUED.

My attention was awakened very much by observing the *dying fancies* of the servants of this world, differing with such characteristic singularity from the fancies of the departing Christian. It is no uncommon thing for those who die to believe they see, or hear, or feel that which appears only fancy to by-standers. Their friends believe that it is the overturning of their intellect. I am not about to enter into the discussion of the question, whether it is or is not always fancy. Some attribute it to more than fancy; but inasmuch as in many instances the mind is deranged while its habitation is falling into ruins, and inasmuch as it is the common belief that it is only imagination of which I am writing, we will look at it under the name of fancy.

The fanciful views of the dying servants of sin, and the devoted friends of Christ, were strangely different as far as my observation extended. One who had been an entire sensualist and a mocker at religion, while dying, appeared in his senses in all but one thing. "Take that black man from the room," said he. He was answered that there was none in the room. He replied, "There he is, standing near the window. His presence is very irksome to me, take him out." After a time, again and again his

call was, "Will no one remove him? There he is; surely some one will take him away."

I was mentioning to another physician my surprise that he should have been so much distressed even if there had been many blacks in the room, for he had been waited on by them day and night for many years; and also my wonder that the mind had not been diseased in some other respect, when he told me the names of two others, his patients, men of similar lives, who were tormented with the same fancy, and in the same way, while dying.

A young female who called the Man of Calvary her greatest friend, was, when dying, in her senses in all but one particular. "Mother," she would say, pointing in a certain direction, "do you see those beautiful creatures?" Her mother would answer, "No, there is no one there, my dear." She would reply, "Well, that is strange. I never saw such countenances and such attire. My eye never rested on any thing so lovely." Oh, says one, this is all imagination, and the notions of a mind collapsing; wherefore tell of it? My answer is, that I am not about to dispute, or to deny that it is fancy; but the fancies differ in features and in texture. Some in their derangement call out, "Catch me, I am sinking; hold me, I am falling;" others say, "Do you hear that music? Oh, were ever notes so celestial!" This kind of notes, and these classes of fancies belonged to different classes of individuals, and *who they were*, was the item which attracted my wonder. Such things are noticed by few, and remembered by almost none; but I am inclined to believe, that if

notes were kept of such cases, volumes of interest might be formed.

My last remark here, reader, is, that we necessarily speak somewhat in the dark of such matters, but you and I will know more shortly. Both of us will see and feel for ourselves where we cannot be mistaken, in the course of a very few months, or years.

CHAPTER LXI.

PREJUDICES—THE MOSAIC LAW.

While prosecuting the inquiry, "Is the Infidel or the Christian in the right?" my surprise was somewhat excited when I looked at disposition attentively. My companions around the card-table, or the festive board, spoke bitterly of the ancient Jews or early Christians. They were like the man who resolved to believe that the Israelites were eaters of human flesh, because the prophet called to the fowls of the air to feast on the slain at a certain battle. The slightest sentence, or part of a sentence in the Bible, seemed sufficient, as soon as they put upon it their own construction, to cause them to believe any thing concerning the Jews or Christians, no matter how abominable or how dreadful. This has been true, according to my experience, for the last thirty years, that unbelievers think so lightly of believers, that on very faint evidence they will receive against them and coolly credit accusations the most detestable and to any variety. My companions in unbelief, and all who wrote for them, seemed to feel very differently towards the heathen. The pagans of every age enjoyed their admiration, and their most charitable conjectures. They praised their poetry, extolled their oratory, stood in ecstasy at their paintings, wondered at their bravery, saw mines of wisdom in all their customs, and passed their defects in silence, or spoke of them in tones of excuse or mitigation. I could not

but notice the difference when I opened a volume of some unbeliever, or listened to the conversation of others, while speaking of the descendants of Abraham. They avowed that they believed these Israelites the most contemptible and abominable people on the earth. I observed, for I could not avoid it, this disposition to hear of that ancient people things the most hateful, and to believe readily and with a kind of pleasure; but I did not let this weigh with me or influence me, until I had noticed the grounds of their belief, and the reasons we all have to think well or ill of either Jew or pagan. My companions offered the *writings* of these ancient people, of course, as the evidence from which their views originated. We all judge of those who lived long since from the books of antiquity. I cannot place before the reader clearly the light in which I viewed this disposition promptly and ardently to admire the heathen, while the worshippers of Jehovah were as readily and as heartily detested, unless I notice the books on either side from which we draw our estimates.

Let us for a short space observe justly and fairly the reasons they have to think well of pagan morality, and then the reasons for thinking poorly of the principles belonging to that people among whom the Old Testament was first promulgated.

REASONS FOR THINKING WELL OF THE HEATHEN. At the age of fourteen, an old man, a grey-headed preacher, put into my hands some of the Latin poets to read.* These writers, Virgil and Horace,

* Centuries will hardly surpass the character of this old man for excellence. He had learned at Princeton to read and

lived near the time when Matthew lived, and wrote not far from the time when Luke and John wrote. Their poetic talents were enough to make even a boy feel them. I was, however, inexpressibly astonished to find that it was sodomy which one of them was extolling! Those far-famed lovesongs, so much read, were sung to boys by the leading authors, in the age so much celebrated for its polish—the reading age. Sins too abominable to think of, even an instant, were, I discovered, dressed up with all the taste of the ablest and most musical verse. If I inquired within myself whether or not the most fashionable and the most accomplished people read the writings of their own most accomplished authors at that time, I was brought, as seemed to me, to something like an understanding of what another writer states, who lived near the same time. He said, "It is a shame even to speak of those things which are done of them in secret."* After reading the history of many of their principal men—see Plutarch's Lives—I discovered that things too detestably disgusting to name, were not considered among them as the least out of the way or improper. After this I read of their human sacrifices, their cruel amusements, long-continued tortures, etc., until compelled to confess that it would not be strange if some should begin to hate the ancient pagans for their hard-heartedness and

to admire the classics. The church in that day, honored the heathen songs more than the infidels. They could read them with more ability, and were more capable of appreciating their beauties. I am not certain that there has been, or is like to be any material alteration.

* Ephesians 5 : 12.

obscenity. Their disgusting customs and their bloody rites were not a matter of conjecture or ambiguous supposition. It was *known* of them, that their doings were too nauseous to write particularly about; but my infidel associates appeared not to know this, or at least not to notice it. They spoke but seldom, and only in extenuation. I then turned to the Jewish writings, to Old or New Testament authors, determined to look at what my infidel friends declared proof enough to consider the children of Jacob the most abominable people upon earth. If I read Luke and compared it with one Latin poet who lived then, or St. John and placed it beside another, the result need not be named. Any one will see how such a comparison must terminate. But this would not be entirely fair, because it was mainly from the Old Testament page that the declaimers supposed they could prove the Jews to be the most detestable people on earth.

Reasons for thinking ill of the Jews. When I went to Moses and the prophets, to see why the world at large so readily believed in the cruelty, the ignorance, the pollution, and the injustice of the circumcised nation, the first things I read in their laws and domestic regulations, were fair and just enough. I read further and was ready to confess, that thus far I had met with that which seemed to me wise, and proper, and impartial. After reading on, my admiration was excited, and I was ready to search, and to meditate, and to weigh the spirit and the principle contained in these statutes. I then read many things such as follow. I wish the reader would observe

closely the spirit of all the verses I am about to quote I wish the reader, in some amiable disposition of soul, in some quiet hour, in some evening of sunshine, and in a sensitive condition of the affections, would peruse such passages as follow, and make the simply truthful inferences. Let us judge if we have reason to suppose the families controlled by such precepts, the most cruel and the most hateful of our sinful race.

Principles that are not cruel.

They are not revengeful.

They are not filthy.

"If a man shall cause a field or vineyard to be eaten, and shall put in his beast, and shall feed in another man's field; of the best of his own field, and of the best of his own vineyard, shall he make restitution.

"Thou shalt neither vex a stranger nor oppress him, for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt.

"Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless child. If thou afflict them in any wise, and they cry at all unto me, I will surely hear their cry; and my wrath shall wax hot, and I will kill you with the sword; and your wives shall be widows, and your children fatherless.

"If thou at all take thy neighbor's raiment to pledge, thou shalt deliver it unto him by that the sun goeth down; for that is his covering only, it is his raiment for his skin: wherein shall he sleep? And it shall come to pass, when he crieth unto me, that I will hear; for I am gracious.

"Thou shalt not revile the magistrates, nor curse the ruler of thy people.

"Ye shall be holy men unto me; neither shall ye eat any flesh that is torn of beasts in the field; ye shall cast it to the dogs.

"Thou shalt not raise a false report: put not thy hand with the wicked to be an unrighteous witness.

"Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil, neither shalt thou speak in a cause to decline after many to wrest judgment.

"If thou meet thine enemy's ox or his ass going astray, thou shalt surely bring it back to him again. If thou see the ass of him that hateth thee lying under his burden, and wouldest forbear to help him, thou shalt surely help with him. Thou shalt not wrest the judgment of thy poor in his cause. Keep thee far from a false matter; and the innocent and the righteous slay thou not; for I will not justify the wicked.

"And thou shalt take no gift; for the gift blindeth the wise, and perverteth the words of the righteous.

"Also thou shalt not oppress a stranger; for ye know the heart of a stranger, seeing ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. And six years thou shalt sow thy land, and shalt gather in the fruits thereof; but the seventh year thou shalt let it rest and lie still, that the poor of thy people may eat; and what they leave the beasts of the field shall eat. In like manner thou shalt deal with thy vineyard and with thy oliveyard." Exodus, chapters 22, 23.

"None of you shall approach to any that is near of kin to him, to uncover their nakedness: I am the Lord. Thou shalt not lie carnally with thy neigh-

bor's wife, to defile thyself with her. Defile not ye yourselves in any of these things; for in all these the nations are defiled which I cast out before you; and the land is defiled; therefore do I visit the iniquity thereof upon it, and the land itself vomiteth out her inhabitants. Ye shall therefore keep my statutes and my judgments, and shall not commit any of these abominations; neither any of your own nation, nor any stranger that sojourneth among you: for all these abominations have the men of the land done, which were before you, and the land is defiled.

"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the Lord your God.

"Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.

"And ye shall not swear by my name falsely: I am the Lord.

"Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbor, neither rob him: the wages of him that is hired, shall not abide with thee all night until the morning.

"Thou shalt not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling-block before the blind, but shalt fear thy God: I am the Lord.

"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment; thou shalt not respect the person of the poor, nor honor the person of the mighty; but in righteousness shalt thou judge thy neighbor.

"Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbor.

"Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him.

"Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself: I am the Lord.

"Ye shall fear every man his mother and his father, and keep my Sabbaths: I am the Lord your God.

"Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honor the face of the old man, and fear thy God: I am the Lord.

"And if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not vex him. But the stranger that dwelleth with you shall be unto you as one born among you, and thou shalt love him as thyself; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God.

"Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight, or in measure. Just balances, just weights, a just ephah, and a just him shall ye have: I am the Lord your God, which brought you out of the land of Egypt." Leviticus, chs. 18, 19.

"If there be among you a poor man of one of thy brethren within any of thy gates in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee, thou shalt not harden thy heart, nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother: but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him, and shalt surely lend him sufficient for his need, in that which he wanteth. Beware that there be not a

thought in thy wicked heart, saying, The seventh year, the year of release, is at hand; and thine eye be evil against thy poor brother, and thou givest him naught; and he cry unto the Lord against thee, and it be sin unto thee. Thou shalt surely give him, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this thing the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thy hand unto. For the poor shall never cease out of the land: therefore I command thee, saying, Thou shalt open thy hand wide unto thy brother, to thy poor, and to thy needy, in thy land.

"And if thy brother, a Hebrew man, or a Hebrew woman, be sold unto thee, and serve thee six years, then in the seventh year thou shalt let him go free from thee. And when thou sendest him out free from thee, thou shalt not let him go away empty. Thou shalt furnish him liberally out of thy flock, and out of thy floor, and out of thy wine-press; of that wherewith the Lord thy God hath blessed thee, thou shalt give unto him. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee; therefore I command thee this thing to-day.

"When thou goest out to battle against thine enemies—the priest shall approach and speak unto the people, and shall say unto them, Hear, O Israel—the Lord your God goeth with you, to fight for you against your enemies, to save you.

"And the officers shall speak unto the people, saying, What man is there that hath built a new house, and hath not dedicated it? let him go and

return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man dedicate it. What man is he that hath planted a vineyard, and hath not yet eaten of it? let him also go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man eat of it. And what man is there that hath betrothed a wife, and hath not taken her? let him go and return unto his house, lest he die in the battle, and another man take her. And the officers shall speak further unto the people, and they shall say, What man is there that is fearful and faint-hearted? let him go and return unto his house, lest his brethren's heart faint as well as his heart.

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ox or his sheep go astray, and hide thyself from them: thou shalt in any case bring them again unto thy brother. And if thy brother be not nigh unto thee, or if thou know him not, then thou shalt bring it unto thine own house, and it shall be with thee until thy brother seek after it, and thou shalt restore it to him again. In like manner shalt thou do with his ass; and so shalt thou do with his raiment; and with all lost things of thy brother's which he hath lost, and thou hast found, shalt thou do likewise: thou mayest not hide thyself.

"Thou shalt not see thy brother's ass or his ox fall down by the way, and hide thyself from them; thou shalt surely help him to lift them up again.

"The woman shall not wear that which pertaineth unto a man, neither shall a man put on a woman's garment; for all that do so are abomination unto the Lord thy God.

"When thou buildest a new house, then thou

shalt make a battlement for thy roof, that thou bring not blood upon thy house, if any man fall from thence.

"No man shall take the upper or the nether mill-stone to pledge; for he taketh a man's life to pledge.

"When a man hath taken a new wife, he shall not go out to war, neither shall he be charged with any business; but he shall be free at home one year, and shall cheer up his wife which he hath taken.

"And it shall be, if the wicked man be worthy to be beaten, that the judge shall cause him to lie down and to be beaten before his face, according to his fault, by a certain number. Forty stripes he may give him, and not exceed; lest if he should exceed, and beat him above these with many stripes, then thy brother should seem vile unto thee.

"Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.

"Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights, a great and a small; thou shalt not have in thy house divers measures, a great and a small; but thou shalt have a perfect and just weight, a perfect and just measure shalt thou have; that thy days may be lengthened in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee. For all that do such things, and all that do unrighteously, are an abomination unto the Lord thy God.

"Thou shalt not oppress a hired servant that is poor and needy, whether he be of thy brethren, or of thy strangers, that are in thy land within thy gates: at his day, thou shalt give him his hire, neither shall

the sun go down upon it, *for he is poor*, and setteth his heart upon it; lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee. The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers; every man shall be put to death for his own sin.

"Thou shalt not pervert the judgment of the stranger, nor of the fatherless, nor take the widow's raiment to pledge; but thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt, and the Lord thy God redeemed thee thence: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

"When thou cuttest down thy harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow; that the Lord thy God may bless thee in all the work of thy hands. When thou beatest thine olive-tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward; it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt." Deut., chap. 15, 20, 22, 24, 25.

After reading these and similar verses, so far from seeing any thing there calculated to make me believe that the people thus governed must be the lowest and the vilest on earth, I could say in truth, that I never had met in any penal code any thing so affecting, and so beautiful; so striking, and so touchingly compassionate. I knew from incontrovertible evidence that

this law was written many centuries before any other book now in the world was written, and yet could see that we should not be injured were we to copy now from this heavenly spirit of mercy and of justice, so wisely blended. These were the reasons why it weakened rather than strengthened the cause of unbelief, if I read in a book, or if I heard in conversasation, expressions of contempt or aversion uttered towards an ancient people and their law, where I was constrained to remember there was so much to admire. There was another kindred incident which may well find a place here. It is the kind of false system from which I was saved, by the circumstance of being compelled to hear the Bible read morning and evening, every day when young.

But this must be reserved for another chapter.

CHAPTER LXIJ.

INFLUENCE OF AN EARLY ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE BIBLE.

I SOMETIMES fell into company with those who felt somewhat perplexed, when they attempted to account for the way in which the Israelites first received the law of Moses. This is the nature of their difficulty: if we make ourselves somewhat acquainted with ancient history, and find a people three thousand years, or two thousand years since, living in the land which we now call Palestine, under a written law, and a law which may at least be called a singular code, the law which we call the law of Moses, it is very natural that we should inquire how they came by it, when did they receive it, or from whom did they obtain it. We know that it either came from heaven, or it did not; that its history in the Bible is either true or false. We can well enough understand that either Moses wrote the law, as they thought he did when they thus lived in Jerusalem, and placed it over them, or some one else wrote it and they received it in some other way. If we endeavor to conjecture that some one, not in the time of Moses, had approached the people with a book purporting to contain the law of Moses, telling them of the journeys and sufferings of their fathers, and speaking of the requirements of heaven and of the wonders their fathers had seen, and had persuaded them to obey

that sacred book, when they had not heard of it before, when they never had heard their fathers speak of that journey, or of those marvels, we must meet with some things to perplex us. That law designated their landmarks, was the title to every man's field, regulated all his possessions and all his pursuits. It would be difficult to make children believe their fathers had reverenced it, if they had not heard of it; or to delude a nation concerning statutes which not only formed their courts and then guided them, but designated the limits of the vineyards, and contained the family register, from which every legal title to all earthly possessions lineally descended to those then holding them. Should we wish to believe that Moses, being a man of great powers, deluded the people, and made them believe they saw marvels when they did not, etc., we do not find our path a smooth one. It is true, that thousands of our race are ignorant, superstitious, and readily deluded in many things. We can point to almost any number of instances, where men were made to receive the weakest falsehood for truth. But there are some cases of deception we *cannot* point to. There never was an instance where a nation of people were made to believe that they passed forty years in a sandy desert, if they did not; or that their bread fell every night from the clouds, if it did not; or that they needed no new clothes, if they did need them; or that they walked through a river without touching water, if they did not. Considerations of this kind and in great number caused some of the difficulties I have stated in the way of those who wished to account for the recep

tion of their law by the Israelites. The more thinking and logical infidels knew that Christianity would be received by most of those who granted that the children of Israel stood at the foot of the smoking mountain, and heard the earth-shaking voice of God pronounce their law. They wished to get clear of this acknowledgment—of even granting the correctness of the history connected with this law; although they knew that later generations of Jews reverenced commemorative feasts, observances, and annual convocations, all pointing back to these occurrences. The question would then again be returning upon them, When did the nation begin to love these ceremonies, obey this law—the title-deed of their habitations—and worship according to its dictates? To account for the way in which they were prevailed on, in any age, to receive this book, and then believe, and then obey it, some would take one course and some another. The same individual was known sometimes to change his theory. I have repeatedly stated that a recollection of the early reading of Moses, kept me from receiving many plans which seemed to content some. I now give the particulars.

If I chanced to be present when some one satisfied an approving circle, by stating that Moses was an artful and an accomplished politician—had written the law, and then flattered the people into a willingness to receive it as their national code, I was met by what I had learned in early life. If telling people of their faults, and nothing but their faults, amounts to flattery, it is not of that kind which pleases those now alive, or even the author of the discovery we are look

ing at. The Jews were told of their cowardice at the Red sea. Of their ignorance, stupidity, stiff-necked rebellion, avarice, sensuality, and ingratitude, I remembered they were told again and again. These things were repeated page after page; but of any excellence belonging to them, I knew Moses had never made the first expression. Indeed, he told of his own sinful weakness excluding him from the promised land. Nay, further than all this, I was reminded by such evasions, that of all the nations on earth this was the only exception; of all the people I had ever read about, this was the only instance where their rulers did not praise them. The generals of antiquity, when their soldiers gained a battle, lauded them with long repeated and unrestrained applause. Cities at home rung with acclamations; and songs were sung in honor of their martial deeds, which were repeated through years of exultation. Napoleon of France and other accomplished leaders would call their troops before them, after a season of activity, and tell them of their noble daring, their invincible courage, their magnanimous resolves, and of the indescribable lustre of their glorious deeds. All this has been as common with man as his use of the spring or the well when thirsty, except in one case. The nation of Israel were told they did nothing, and God did all. They fought through conflict after conflict, and were successful. It was the duty and the custom of the leader to tell them, that if it had been left to them, they would have been defeated; that their strength was weakness. That God fought for them, and that of themselves they were worthless, was the doctrine

registered in the book of their laws, the narrative of their marches, and the history of their victories. They were told it in their public assemblies, and it was repeated in the private circle.

I remembered the natural wishes of the human heart. I remembered of other nations how much they seemed pleased when their historians made out their descent from some great hero, or from Jupiter, or some other heathen deity. This was so common, and was practised so long, and so universally almost, that we might well observe the conduct of Moses on this point. The shepherds he names as their ancestors, had their faults, blots, crimes, or blemishes noted down so plainly and so unsparingly, that he either did not intend to foster their national vanity, or he was very deficient in the talent of flattery. Instead of making out their descent from ancient gods, he gives it from men, and weak, sinful men. This history alone is not all. Each man in the nation was commanded to appear in public, with a basket of fruit, on a convenient day, and standing up to pronounce aloud, not, "I am descended from Jupiter;" or, "Magnificent conquerors were my ancestors;" but, "A Syrian ready to perish was my father."

Indeed, I have often thought that it was not strange that the people felt reluctant to receive a history which told more of defects than virtues. The theory that the nation was flattered into the reception of the law, or loved the Old Testament because it praised them, was not likely to last long at any given time or place. Others must be invented in the stead of it. The supposition that they received the

law as other people receive their laws, hoping for advantage, for worldly profit, etc., never weighed more than the first-mentioned, with those who have read or heard the books of Moses. Nay, I have often wondered that any thing ever did prevail on them to receive it at any time. Reader, I need not tell you again of that which you already know. I need not prove the truths, that men are fond of worldly prosperity; that they love money; that they delight to see their possessions increase. You know that nothing excites a community more speedily or more effectually than that which threatens their property. Men turn away from nothing with more determined abhorrence, than from a regulation which would seem to promise them toil without gain, and labor without profit.

Any one, first looking at the unwillingness of communities to be heavily taxed, might exclaim with sincere astonishment, "Is it possible that this people ever submitted to a law which called for a tenth of their annual income more than once?" The answer is, that the law of Moses called for tithing more than once for different purposes; and this was not all. If we compute the offerings and sacrifices, gifts and multiplied requirements, we find that it must have reached from one-fourth to perhaps one-half of the whole income. After this, if we observe that they were not allowed to sow every seventh year, but were to leave the natural produce of their land for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; that they were not allowed to work every seventh day; that, during long feasts, they were not allowed to work; that, during convocation after convocation,

they were to do no servile work; we begin to feel as though these people at the end of the year, will surely have nothing to live on, aside from giving away, or burning upon altars. If we then hear them charged not to reap the corners of their fields, but to leave them for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow; not to go back after the forgotten sheaf; not to strike the olive-limb twice; not to glean the vineyard; not to eat of the orchard for four years after it begins to bear, etc., we are ready to exclaim, unless we trust in the interference of Heaven, surely if ever a people were to work and have nothing, to toil and to give it all away, here is the instance. I have often wondered that all the promises or threatenings they heard, that all the wonders they saw or the plagues which swept them off by thousands, that all the denunciations of Moses or the thunders of Sinai ever made a nation agree to receive a code of rules which called for seemingly almost all the property they could possibly acquire. It called for no licentious revels; it permitted no unholy indulgences; and it enjoined the observance of that which ease-loving and sensual man naturally hates. They did not wish to receive it; and they long sought to escape from its government; but they had a God to contend with.

Postscript. I have since observed, with some surprise and interest, how the principle *that God's people are not to be praised,* has been exhibited all through every part of the Old and New Testament. The apostles loved the Saviour. The men who wrote his history and had been with him so intimately and so long, never speak of his lofty look, his command

ing gesture, or utter any expression of praise, such as other writers do concerning the objects of their admiration or the principal personage of their narratives. Peter loved and reverenced, and quoted from the holy Scriptures; yet these were the Scriptures which were to tell to all future generations his pride and his self-conceit, his treachery and his lies. After Peter had wept over his cowardice, and had preached for many years, confessing his sins, and enduring persecution, he fell again into sin, and acted very unbecomingly for a leader in the church. Paul, in writing to the churches, told plainly of it, and said that he had to withstand Peter to the face. How will the grey-headed bishop bear this, when he shall write to the churches? He did write, and he spoke of the epistles of his "beloved brother Paul," which some wrested, as they did "also the other scriptures, to their own destruction." No writer in that book ever speaks of the bravery, or the amiableness, or the sagacity, or the hardihood of others. It is the only volume on earth whose manner is relation of naked fact. This singular feature in the sacred Scriptures runs through the volume; but we often read without remarking it. I will, before leaving the subject, refer to one or two other illustrations.

David, king of Israel, had fought and conquered and triumphed so often and so long, had received wealth and ease and greatness so continually, that when reading of his falling into sin, the man of sense and candor is only surprised that it did not happen sooner. History informs us that it has been common with potentates whose nod has long been law, to de-

stroy those who tell them faithfully of their crimes. The prophet came into David's presence, and pictured the sin in its native and abominable colors. The king did not apply it to himself. He had, like all other sinners, excused and palliated his own conduct, until it seemed very passable in his own eyes. After the prophet had pictured the deformity of the sin, he stood up before the monarch, and faithfully said to him, "Thou art the man." The king bowed his head, confessed his guilt, and asked the prophet to pray for him.

Instead of urging many excuses, or holding up numerous palliatives, or denying and hiding his crime, he wept and humbled himself, great and lofty as was his throne, bright and extensive as was the sceptre of his authority. The songs which the king made were sung in public by many voices. In the presence of the court, and before the assembled priests, the monarch knew that collected Jerusalem would sing his verses; nay, that his words would confess his guilt, and bring his crime to the notice of other generations, and hold up his sin before distant assemblies to the latest days. And what were those words? "Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy loving-kindness: according to the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation."

The man who has been an observer of his fellow-man while looking down the page of history, remembers something of the disposition common to those

who have by their exploits in battle become idols of the people.

The man who has intellect enough to compare, and industry enough to observe, can see that this penitential confession of Israel's king is not in the character of an unconverted man. He can see that there is as much difference between the conduct of a converted and an unconverted potentate, as there is between gold and charcoal, between morning and midnight. I remember when all these striking features of this strange book were unseen by me. The stupor of ignorance both veiled my eyes and enveloped my affections.

ANOTHER INSTANCE. The difference between a converted and an unconverted father; or rather, the difference between a father moved by inspiration, and one speaking from his own innate feeling.

Jacob had twelve sons. A youthful prince treated their sister amiss, but loved, married, and was kind to her. Her haughty brothers might have forgiven his sin, after he had confessed and repented of it. They professed forgiveness, but with two of them it was only pretence. They acted the hypocrite until they found the auspicious moment, and then killed the young man and all his household, except their sister. Jacob removed, and was not involved in war in consequence of this transaction; but he reproved his sons, and no doubt felt at the time as a pious father should feel. Many fathers might have been pleased by the sheep and oxen gathered in this contest, their pride might have been gratified at the revengeful victory of their strong and impetuous sons;

but it was not so with Jacob. He forgave his children, however, and lived with them in peace for very many years. At last the grey-headed man coming to die, speaks to his sons as they stand around his dying couch. He tells his sons of their descendants, of the comparative strength, success, and number of their tribes. His prophecies concerning them reached down more than nineteen hundred years. It is common with fathers, if they have been at variance with their children, to forgive them on a dying-bed. The hour of their departure is not the time to reprove and to call up faults that are passed; but Jacob, under the influence of inspiration, must utter the truth, however his parental tenderness might incline him to kind expressions. He speaks of his first-born son Reuben, tells him of his sins, and tells him that he never shall excel. The tribe of Reuben never did The old man had, like other fathers, loved his first-born son, had forgiven him his faults, but he was telling him the purposes of heaven in this case. See Genesis, chap. 49.

The dying patriarch speaks joyously of many of his sons, tells of their particular location in the promised land, and in some instances, their particular history in a very interesting manner. No doubt in the bosom of this kind, aged father there was something which would have pleased him, could he have spoken cheeringly of Simeon and Levi, two of his beloved sons who stood in the weeping circle. What were his words in their case?

"Simeon and Levi are brethren; instruments of cruelty are in their habitations. O my soul, come

not thou into their secret; unto their assembly, mine honor, be not thou united; for in their anger they slew a man, and in their self-will they digged down a wall. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce; and their wrath, for it was cruel. I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel."

On reading this chapter of Genesis, I remembered enough of history to see that the prophecy was true concerning Judah, and concerning Joseph—of whom there were two tribes—and others; but when Simeon, Levi, and Reuben, were mentioned, I saw clearly that the natural feelings of a mortal father were not speaking. The time was when I could read such a chapter and see no beauty, no interesting prediction, no lovely feature there. Ten thousand excellences of the inspired volume are too lofty to be seen by the earth-gazing eye of drowsy mortals.

CHAPTER LXIII.

COMMEMORATIVE INSTITUTIONS

If any one in my hearing, wishing to cast reproach on the name of Moses, or to discredit the narrative written by him, spoke of the lawgiver as covetous, desirous of fame, seeking after aggrandizement, exultation, and honors, like other ambitious men, I could not rest satisfied with his reasoning. I knew that ambitious fathers placed their children in posts of honor if they could, and aimed to have their authority descend to their own families. I remembered, that much influence as Moses had with the nation, his family descended to or remained in complete obscurity. His sons were no more noticed than the sons of the poorest man in the camp.

A certain ancient traveller, in writing back to Rome, said that the Egyptians told him of the Red sea having in former days, at a given place, ebbed until the bottom was left dry, and that an army was drowned there. This reminded me that the people of Egypt for a long time remembered certain occurrences which are related by the Jewish lawgiver. Nay, it is a matter of common history, that the Egyptians were in the habit for thousands of years, even down to modern times, of rising at midnight on a certain day of the year, lighting candles, and going about the house weeping and groaning until morning. It seems to us as though this must have been

a ceremony commemorative of that night, that terrible night, when there was one dead in every house. Noting these facts, and remembering the disposition there is in the bosom of man to commemorate striking events, weakened, very much weakened, the theories of all my companions in infidelity, if ever I heard them attempt to account for the origin or commencement of the passover, or other Jewish rites and feasts.

I knew that the event which once took place in our national hall on the fourth of July, was as permanently recorded in the annual observance of that day, as on paper. Anniversaries year after year tell over and over again the same fact of history, the same events which gave rise to their observance, for any number of centuries. Recalling the fact to every one's remembrance every twelve months, makes the child inquire about it, and the parents have their recollections refreshed if it be ever necessary.

If all our books were burned, and if we were to have no more written history of our revolution, the declaration of our independence might be long preserved by the celebration of the day on which it took place. The way in which the fourth day of July is observed, is in itself a history of an occurrence belonging to the year 1776. It is a register of that transaction which is read every year, and which would tell future generations about it, if we had no books. But although important events are kept alive by some annual commemoration, and in every nation some things have been thus correctly preserved through many centuries, still, a national record added to these

returning festivals has doubled the strength of their perpetuity. If England has remembered certain victories of distant days by yearly rejoicings, these facts are handed down with more correctness because they have historians of respectability, and because they are a reading people. If the declaration of our independence is kept fresh before us by annual celebrations, still, the accurate circumstantials of the event are preserved more certainly by the addition of historic records. In other words, where history and annual observances unite, we have the strongest chain of testimony which ever reaches from age to age. Many of our people who are very young, or who cannot read, have their minds informed by hearing the declaration of our independence read, while in the midst of the large assembly.

If our fathers had all believed that God had ordered the writing of that paper in its present form, or if he had really appeared to them and had spoken a part of it in their hearing, or if the executive of our nation at his bidding had commanded that every year these things should be celebrated, and that the whole history should be read aloud in the hearing of the assembly, it would, no doubt, have added to the clearness and to the certainty of our recollections; but just as they stand, our history and our anniversaries will save us from any material mistake concerning the facts of '76, as long, no doubt, as we remain together as a people.

The Egyptians, without written history, seemed long to remember the night when the angel did not pass over their houses, and when they arose at mid-

night, and wept until morning. The Israelites observed the night in a way that was to remind them that the angel did pass over their houses, and did not destroy their first-born; also that they were in readiness to march immediately and to depart from Egypt.

But in addition to this annual feast, a history of all the circumstances was written, as they believed at the command of the God whose presence was visible in the cloudy pillar; and they were ordered to have it read, for the sake of the unlearned, in the hearing of all the people, without omission and without neglect.

I could see that during any one year, it would be a difficult matter to persuade a nation into a falsehood connected with the celebration of the preceding year; and the same difficulty belonged to the year before this, and the year before that again, until we reached the origin of the feast, or the event which gave rise to the celebration. I could not have wished to be in the condition of one whose task it was to persuade himself that our fathers believed they had, at a given time, declared themselves independent, when they really had not. I could not wish to be under the necessity of fixing upon the year when this national belief, joyous without foundation, had its rise. Political revolutions are plain occurrences. Opinions, false, universal, and triumphant, are not commonly found to exist, concerning the change of empires. The removal of a nation from its residence to its distant habitation, an entire nation, is a very plain transaction to the eyes of those who are there, and to their children for many years. When my companions at-

tempted to account for the origin of the passover and other Jewish observances, in a way differing from their own history of these feasts, or to suppose that the nation thought their fathers had passed through the sea and through the desert, when it was not so, I could see that they had a task as difficult and as toilsome as it would be quietly to believe the Israelitish records.

There were impediments in the road, which few would surmount unless they had a strong natural inclination to walk in the path of infidelity.

CHAPTER LXIV.

THE FIFTY-THIRD OF ISAIAH.

I REMEMBERED that I had heard it stated, or had read, that the famous profligate the Earl of Rochester was much surprised after reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. This wicked man was not destitute of education, and he knew that if the book of Isaiah had been no older than the Greek translation of it made for the Alexandrian library, still, it had been read two hundred years before the birth of the Saviour; and this was as striking as though it had been a thousand. It was said that this earl avowed, in pale astonishment, that the twelve verses contained an accurate account of the life, reception, character, trial, manner of trial, death, manner of death, resurrection, etc., of the crucified Saviour. He thought it as plain as the history of him given in Matthew. My curiosity was excited. I wished to judge for myself, and I opened the book and read, "Who hath believed our report; and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?"

I thought that if this was a complaint of the prophets that so few of our race had listened to their message, or received their doctrines, it was perhaps not destitute of accuracy thus far.

I read again, "He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground."

I asked a minister what he understood by this. He replied, that plants that grow from a dry soil are tender, and that they require more watering, and more the watchful care of the gardener, than others.

He said that he had read of the Redeemer, that he was waited upon by angels, that he was strengthened, and that he supposed the Saviour had as much the care of his heavenly Father as the attentive husbandman ever bestows upon the tenderest plant. I could not controvert his opinion, but I read on without deciding as yet, in my own mind, on its correctness.

"He hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him."

I did not find this very hard to understand, for I had known before that the Jews, having expected a splendid prince for their Messiah, one who would make them very wealthy and very powerful, did not see much beauty in the poverty of the reputed son of Joseph of Nazareth. Neither did the next verses require any interpreter.

"He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

"Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows; yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all."

I could see that the doctrine of *substitution*, which I had heard preached all my life, was surely in these verses; but I was not so much surprised as

I have since been, to see how often it is repeated and varied in mode of expression in this short chapter. The next two verses began to awaken my attention.

"He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment; and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken."

I remembered his singular silence before Pilate, but this did not seem to be the only item mentioned concerning his trial. Criminals usually when taken into custody, are confined in the jail until the sitting of the court, which is often not sooner than some weeks or months. If they are tried and condemned, they are thrown again into prison, and after a time executed. I had heard that the word prison, in many languages, often meant no more than custody; therefore, when I read, "He was taken from prison and from judgment," I remembered that Christ was taken into custody, and hurried directly before the judgment-seat, his trial hurried on by shouts of impatience, and as soon as condemned he was taken from judgment immediately to execution. These circumstantial details began to strike me with much interest, which was not diminished by the succeeding verse.

"And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth."

It was plain enough that he lay in the tomb of

the rich man of Arimathea, while the wicked soldiers surrounded it; but one who understood the Hebrew, informed me that the original text stated more directly what is related in the New Testament, namely, that they designed his grave with the wicked, but God ordered it otherwise, because he had done no violence; because he was not a malefactor, he was not permitted to be buried with malefactors, where his enemies certainly were about to bury him, if no one had asked Pilate for his body.

"Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand."

I had read just before, that he was to be cut off out of the land of the living, and buried; of course, when I found it declared that his days were yet to be prolonged, I was necessarily reminded of his resurrection. I could see without assistance from any commentary, that with his resurrection announced in this verse, was also connected the prosperity of his cause. In the Bible, and by the church in every age, the converted, or those born again, are and have been called the *children* of God. I was aware of this, and could understand, of course, that if he saw his seed in a time of prosperity, it must be after his leaving the earth, for while here he was the man of sorrows.

"He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great,

and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered, with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

The oriental expressions of having a portion with the great, and dividing the spoil with the strong, I knew in other eastern books referred to *prosperity*. I remembered, that whether he merited it or not, the name of Christ had extended over a considerable part of our race, and that his friends believed his sceptre would reach still wider. I did not know but that his *portion* was to be truly great.

The doctrine of *vicarious* sufferings is reiterated in these last two verses. That he was to be numbered with actual transgressors is declared—one was crucified on his right hand, and the other on his left.

That he was to pray for them is announced; and I now see that it is very affecting to think of his saying, while the weight of his body was resting on metallic spikes, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do."

On closing the volume I could not but confess that the circumstantials of life and death, trial and burial, resurrection and results, were presented in singular variety. If I had asked myself why I had read this so often before without observing it, the truthful answer must have been somewhat humiliating. In consequence of the long indulgence of sin, sensuality, and pride, it is true that ignorance and sluggish inattention will take possession of the soul of man. Respecting heaven's pure religion, the intellectual operations of the wisest become utterly besotted.

CHAPTER LXV.

A PROPHECY OF DANIEL.

The following passage of Scripture I never did read with profit until aided by a commentator. The meaning is not so hidden, it is not so obscure as to baffle the research of the unlearned, but it required the remarks of others to awaken towards it my scrutinizing regard.

"And while I was speaking, and praying, and confessing my sin, and the sin of my people Israel, and presenting my supplication before the Lord my God for the holy mountain of my God; yea, while I was speaking in prayer, even the man Gabriel, whom I had seen in the vision at the beginning, being caused to fly swiftly, touched me about the time of the evening oblation. And he informed me, and talked with me, and said, O Daniel, I am now come forth to give thee skill and understanding. At the beginning of thy supplications the commandment came forth, and I am come to show thee; for thou art greatly beloved: therefore understand the matter, and consider the vision. Seventy weeks are determined upon thy people and upon thy holy city, to finish the transgression, and to make an end of sins, and to make reconciliation for iniquity, and to bring in everlasting righteousness, and to seal up the vision and prophecy, and to anoint the Most Holy. Know therefore and understand, that from the going forth of the commandment to restore and to build Jerusalem unto the

Messiah the Prince, shall be seven weeks, and threescore and two weeks; the street shall be built again, and the wall, even in troublous times. And after threescore and two weeks shall Messiah be cut off, but not for himself: and the people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary; and the end thereof shall be with a flood, and unto the end of the war desolations are determined. And he shall confirm the covenant with many for one week; and in the midst of the week he shall cause the sacrifice and the oblation to cease, and for the overspreading of abominations, he shall make it desolate, even until the consummation, and that determined shall be poured upon the desolate." Daniel 9:20–27.

I desire to place before the reader a few facts of which I was informed by the commentary of Scott, and of others which I had known and laid aside; but they were brought to my recollection in such a way that I must necessarily apply them. After travelling speedily over this ground, I shall endeavor to draw the necessary inference.

The Israelites, in reckoning their time, made use of two kinds of weeks, very different in duration, but the same in parts, commencement, and termination. They used the week so well known with us, seven days in extent, and commencing with a Sabbath of one day, or twenty-four hours. Their other week, which we have ceased to use, was seven years in extent, and commenced with a Sabbath of one year's duration. Of course each day of this week was one year. The Israelite who would say it was three

weeks until jubilee, meant twenty-one years. That a week was seven years in length, did not seem strange to him, as it does to those who have long ceased to compute time in this way. The heathen took up the Jewish mode, and reckoned by that week. A celebrated author, in writing his life, and stating that he had passed his eleventh week, did not pause to make any explanation. He seemed to feel that the pagan world at that time were so familiar with the week of years, that all his readers would know he was seventy-seven years of age. The people of Daniel, and perhaps all the surrounding nations, knew well that these seventy weeks named by the angel, reached across four hundred and ninety years; and they were looking for the appearance of a great Saviour the year in which Christ was born, but they did not know him when he appeared not clothed with pomp.

The people of Israel were in captivity; their homes were naked and despoiled; and if they ever did return to build their city, it must be by edict from the potentate holding them in subjection. After the vision of the prophet, those who were watching for the redemption of the world, would also watch and listen for a command from some of Persia's monarchs to restore and to build Jerusalem; and from the date of this command, would note the commencement of the seventy weeks. There were two commands to this effect: ordering, and then ordering again, the restoration of Jerusalem. One of these decrees was obtained in the seventh, and the other in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes.

Sir Isaac Newton justly observes, that "the dispersed Jews became a people and a city, when they returned into a *body politic;* and that was in the seventh year of Artaxerxes Longimanus." Maclaurin. The seventy weeks accomplish the declarations of Heaven, if commenced immediately after one of these commandments, and if weeks of solar years are used; while from the other, if seventy weeks of lunar years are counted, the termination is the same. This astronomical accommodation awakens the surprise of many. That the walls and streets of Jerusalem were nearly fifty years in building, and that the times were so troublous that the workmen labored with a sword in one hand, and a building implement in the other, I had read elsewhere, but had never applied it so as to note the accuracy of the prophet, until reminded of the prediction and the fulfilment by the commentary.

Whoever reads Ezra and Nehemiah, may feel that the difficulties connected with Jerusalem's restoration were indeed sufficiently pressing to merit the language "troublous times." That expression will never again stand before him as covered with obscurity. Scott points us to the fact, that the term of seventy weeks in the text is divided into three several portions. These three different periods are of a very unequal length, but when added together make up the seventy. They are a term of seven weeks, and of sixty-two weeks, and of one week. The seven weeks' term extends across the time of building, which was so dangerous and so toilsome. This lasted forty-nine years; each one of the seven weeks being seven

years, according to our mode of reckoning. The workmen were beset by their enemies in such a manner, that they labored while clothed in armor. The sixty-two weeks seem to extend from this time, until the Most Holy was anointed on the bank of Jordan. Oil had been used to anoint other high-priests; but to anoint the great High-priest, that which the oil signified, the Holy Spirit, was seen to descend and rest upon him. After his baptism, the Saviour travelled and preached, healed and instructed, for three years and six months, just the half of a week, before he was crucified. He rose from the dead, ascended, and told his followers to go and tender the gospel in his name to the earth, but to begin at Jerusalem. They did so, and during another half week, thousands on thousands accepted, and with them the covenant was confirmed, before the preachers were driven from Judea to offer it to the Gentiles. This last term of one week is divided into two parts. It was in the middle of it that the great sacrifice was offered, which annihilated the utility of all other sacrifices. It was in the middle of the last week that the oblation was poured out, which instantly checked the efficacy of all other oblations. We are told, that when Messiah should be cut off, it would not be for himself. This points us to the atonement—to the vicarious sufferings which, as we have noticed, were shown so fully to Isaiah, and which he repeated with such strange variety of words. A covenant is an agreement between two parties. When one offers and the other refuses, a covenant is not confirmed. When both agree, it is confirmed or closed. God's part of the

agreement which he offers to make, is, that he will take the one who has sinned as his child, place the everlasting righteousness brought into view by the Most Holy during the last one of the seventy weeks to the man's account, as though it belonged to him, protect, guide, and finally save. Reader, he is serious, and will confirm such a contract with you, if you wish it. Man's part of the covenant is, that he will accept the gift of this righteousness, confessing he did not make it himself; cease opposition to his Maker; inquire after all his precepts, and obey them. During the three years and a half before the death of Christ, he, with his apostles, confirmed this covenant with many of Daniel's nation; and his apostles, after he left them, did the same for half a week in his name. After this, obstinacy prevailed; and it was not very long before the "people of the prince," that was foretold when Daniel lived, the Romans, came and did destroy "the city and the sanctuary." If any should inquire what is meant by the sentence, "The end thereof shall be with a flood," I would answer, Read a full account of the siege and destruction of Jerusalem; and if the expression is not fully explained, I am unable to make it plainer. Flavius Josephus was a spectator of that flood. He wrote, and his books may be read. As it regards the desolations which were to overwhelm the nation which cut off the Messiah, we are only told that they should roll on until the consummation; how long before the consummation, this chapter does not tell. God's people have seen them pouring out, and have looked on with wonder for eighteen hundred years, asking,

"Will this torrent never cease to beat upon the desolate?" The answer is, Not before the consummation. But we have reason to believe this now approaches so near that we may begin to discern it dimly.

Respecting the measurement of these three divisions of weeks, it is true that the quibbler may cavil and speak zealously against the prophecy; and so he can quibble and speak plausible falsehood concerning the proper location of any star in the heavens. I shall then go on at once to the inference promised, which is brief, and may be speedily drawn.

Application. I had read heathen poets, and had applauded them. I had read ancient orators, and had admired them. I had watched with great curiosity, even a little turn of expression in a historian, who lived long since. Why did I not observe and wonder at the fact, that here, on the page of prophecy, which was written five hundred years beforehand, which had been in Egypt three hundred years before Messiah "was cut off," was found a relation of interesting events which were to take place, as accurate as the record of them after they did take place? Why was I not at least excited so far as to inquire into the matter? The reason is, that man is inclined to run after falsehood and nonsense, with more activity than he is after truth and things of everlasting moment. Some millions of our race have found this out; but there are more millions who do not believe it.

CHAPTER LXVI.

AN OUTLINE OF HISTORY.

The following passage of Scripture, taken from the same prophet, was not, if I now remember accurately, observed faithfully by me, until I had a hope in the Messiah who was "cut off." I am, however, very confident that if I had noticed it closely at any portion of my life, and had heard it expounded by any one acquainted with history, I should have deemed it worthy of a second reading. I might inform the reader that the passage is in the seventh chapter of Daniel, and ask him to take a Bible and peruse it; but I deem it best on many accounts to transcribe the most of the chapter.

"Daniel spake and said, I saw in my vision by night, and behold, the four winds of the heaven strove upon the great sea. And four great beasts came up from the sea, diverse one from another. The first was like a lion, and had eagle's wings: I beheld till the wings thereof were plucked, and it was lifted from the earth, and made stand upon the feet as a man, and a man's heart was given to it. And behold, another beast, a second, like to a bear, and it raised up itself on one side, and it had three ribs in the mouth of it between the teeth of it: and they said thus unto it, Arise, devour much flesh. After this, I beheld, and lo, another, like a leop-

ard, which had upon the back of it four wings of a fowl: the beast had also four heads; and dominion was given to it. After this I saw in the night visions, and behold a fourth beast, dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it: and it was diverse from all the beasts that were before it; and it had ten horns. I considered the horns, and behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots: and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of man, and a mouth speaking great things.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of his head like the pure wool: his throne was like the fiery flame, and his wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before him: thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened. I beheld then because of the voice of the great words which the horn spake: I beheld even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame. As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time. I saw in the night visions, and behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days, and they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, nations

and languages, should serve him: his dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.

"I Daniel was grieved in my spirit in the midst of my body, and the visions of my head troubled me. I came near unto one of them that stood by, and asked him the truth of all this. So he told me, and made me know the interpretation of the things. These great beasts, which are four, are four kings, which shall arise out of the earth. But the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever. Then I would know the truth of the fourth beast, which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, whose teeth were of iron, and his nails of brass; which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet; and of the ten horns that were in his head, and of the other which came up, and before whom three fell; even of that horn that had eyes, and a mouth that spake very great things, whose look was more stout than his fellows. I beheld, and the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them; until the Ancient of days came, and judgment was given to the saints of the Most High; and the time came that the saints possessed the kingdom. Thus he said, The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise: and another shall arise after them; and he shall be diverse from the first,

and he shall subdue three kings. And he shall speak great words against the Most High, and shall wear out the saints of the Most High, and think to change times and laws: and they shall be given into his hand until a time and times and the dividing of time. But the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his dominion to consume and to destroy it unto the end And the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High, whose kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and all dominions shall serve and obey him." Daniel 7:2–27.

An outline of history for many centuries is desirable. There are many who would be glad to be familiar with the profile of the most prominent nations of the earth, for the last two thousand three hundred years. An ordinary attention to this chapter will furnish this much abbreviated, but very correct history. Those who complain of enfeebled memories, will find a remedy in the imagery of the verses we have transcribed. Those who desire it, can at any time obtain a very gratifying amount of historic information, with trifling labor, and in a way which will forbid its departing from them.

There is something in the texture of the youthful mind, which disposes it to lay hold on, and to retain figures either beautiful or terrible, especially if they are systematically striking.

A teacher of history may communicate, I feel assured, after repeated trial, more knowledge in a given time, by causing the student to learn a number of

passages taken from different prophets, than can be done in any other way.

The chapter before us is one. The history begins five hundred years before the birth of the Redeemer, reaches us, and passes us by a very few items, and for aught we know, the time may be as inconsiderable in its duration. The first three verses tell us of great beasts coming up from the sea, diverse one from another. Elsewhere in the Bible, we are informed that the sea is the emblem of the restless and noisy populace of agitated nations. The prophets of God, when about to picture a power which reached its elevation after a long march through blood, where the feet were dipped in human gore at every stride, have used as an emblem a beast, wild and ferocious. By the accurate propriety of any picture, the memory is greatly assisted. On the fourth verse, which tells us of the lion which had eagle's wings, and whose wings were plucked, Scott makes the following observations:

"The Chaldean empire, as advanced to its summit of prosperity under Nebuchadnezzar, and as declining under Belshazzar, was intended by this beast. The lion was an emblem of Nebuchadnezzar's courage and success, in acquiring the dominion over his neighbors; and perhaps of his superior generosity and magnanimity, with which he ruled over the nations. The eagle's wings denoted the rapidity and unabated vigor with which he prosecuted his victories. But as the prophet saw this, he observed that the wings thereof were plucked. After the death of Nebuchadnezzar, the Chaldeans made no more conquests; several of

the subjected nations revolted. The Medes and Persians soon began to straiten them, till at length Babylon was besieged and taken, and so that monarchy was terminated. No longer did this beast appear rapid in conquest as an eagle, or courageous and terrible as a lion, but it was changed as it were into a human creature; it stood on its feet as a man, and had a man's heart given to it. After Nebuchadnezzar's death, the kings of Babylon became less terrible to their foes and subjects, and more cautious and even timid, till at length Belshazzar shut himself up in Babylon, not daring to face Cyrus, as a man would not venture to face a raging bear, which a lion would despise."

The fifth verse tells us of another beast, like to a bear, which raised up itself on one side, and which had three ribs in its mouth.

The individual who loves to learn, and who desires to remember important facts, is told in this verse, that the Chaldean empire was succeeded by that of the Medes and Persians. This bear raised itself up on one side, or in other words, pushed its victories towards the west alone, almost. This animal had three ribs in its mouth, or, in other words, Babylon, Lydia, and Egypt were conquered, oppressed, or as it were devoured by the Persian bear.

Concerning the sixth verse, which mentions the leopard with wings, and with four heads, our commentator makes the following remarks: "The bear having disappeared, the prophet saw an extraordinary leopard rise up in its stead. This was the emblem of the Grecian or Macedonian empire, which

for the time was the most renowned in the world It was erected by Alexander the Great, on the ruins of the Persian monarchy, and it continued in four divisions under his successors. The leopard being exceedingly fierce and swift, represented the kingdom, and especially Alexander its founder; but the swiftness of a quadruped was not an adequate emblem of the rapidity with which he made his conquests, as he subdued nations more speedily than others could march their armies through them. The leopard had therefore four wings of a fowl upon his back. When Alexander died, his kingdom was, after many contests among his captains, divided into four parts, Egypt, Syria, Macedonia, and Thrace with some regions of Asia Minor. These were the four heads of this third beast, and under them dominion was given to it, until it was gradually reduced by the next beast."

The seventh and eighth verses tell us of the fourth beast, and describe the Romans in a few words, but very strikingly. This empire is called a beast, strong and terrible. All who have read the history of Rome, and then read these verses, have wondered at the amount of character handed to us in these few words. They have wondered at the extent of the picture drawn in one single verse. The iron teeth, the devouring, and stamping, and breaking in pieces, tell those who know something of the history of the world, of the people and nation here portrayed, at once. The historian knows that the fourth beast was indeed diverse from any that preceded, and from any that have followed it.

"This fourth beast evidently accords with the legs and feet of iron, which were seen by Nebuchadnezzar in his visionary image, and which were at length divided into ten toes. It far exceeded in power, fierceness, and destructive rage, all that had gone before it, as well as in the extent and long duration of its dominion; and no animal could be found so terrible and furious, as to lend it a suitable name. This was doubtless an emblem of the Roman state, the invincible fortitude, hardiness, and force of which perhaps were never equalled. By wars and conquests the Romans bore down all opposition, and reduced almost every kingdom or state in the known world, into some kind or degree of dependence; drew all the spoil and wealth of many conquered nations, to enrich their proud capital; and tyrannized over all that did not yield obedience to their authority. That which the Romans could not quietly enjoy in other countries they would give to other kings and rulers, that at all times when they would, they might take it again; which liberality is here called stamping the rest with their feet.

"This fourth empire was governed in another manner, by other maxims, than any of the preceding, and in process of time it was divided into ten kingdoms, which have been thus numbered in the eighth century. 1. The Senate of Rome; 2. The Greeks at Ravenna; 3. The Lombards in Lombardy; 4. The Huns in Hungary; 5. The Alemanes in Germany; 6. The Franks in France; 7. The Burgundians in Burgundy; 8. The Goths in Spain; 9. The Britons; 10. The Saxons in Britain. They are in-

deed reckoned up in several ways, by different writers, according to the date assigned to their enumeration, but in general, it is clear that they were nearly the same with the principal kingdoms in Europe at this day. It is certain that the Roman empire was divided into ten kingdoms, and though they might be sometimes more and sometimes fewer, yet they were still known by the name of the ten kingdoms of the Western empire." Scott.

The learned of the earth have praised one of their own number, for one particular trait of character belonging to him in full measure. They have said that Sir Isaac Newton would not indulge in wild speculations, and vain conjecture. It is stated that in all his astronomical and philosophical researches, every doctrine which he advanced was built on fact, and that further than this he would not proceed. He seems to have preserved this feature of his mind while writing on prophecy. I never understood one fact concerning the ten horns of the fourth beast, until I read and closely noticed a passage of this philosopher's writing, concerning that beast. I knew that the Roman empire was divided, and that ten kingdoms had existed in Europe as fragments, or horns of that beast; but I did not know why eastern countries, over which the Roman sceptre had extended, were not included. I knew that in Europe, for twelve hundred years, ten horns had been visible, but if Asia should be taken into the reckoning, the number of horns must be extended. The astronomer saw clearly enough why the kingdoms of Europe alone were to constitute the body and the horns of

the beast. His words we will transcribe, for the sake of those who may wish to understand plainly this interesting part of history.

"All the four beasts are still alive, though the dominion of the three first be taken away. This corresponds with the declaration of the twelfth verse, that although their dominion was gone, they had their lives prolonged for a season and a time. The nations of Chaldea and Assyria are still the first beast; those of Media and Persia are still the second beast; those of Macedonia, Greece, Thrace, Asia Minor, Syria, and Egypt, are still the third; and those of Europe on this side are still the fourth. Seeing therefore the body of the third beast is confined to the nations on this side of the river Euphrates, and the body of the fourth beast to the nations on this side Greece, we are to look for all the four heads of the third beast among the nations on this side the Euphrates, and for all the eleven horns of the fourth beast among the nations on this side of Greece. And therefore, at the breaking of the Greek empire into four kingdoms, we include no part of the Chaldeans, Medes, and Persians, in those kingdoms, because they belonged to the bodies of the two first beasts. Nor do we reckon the Greek empire seated at Constantinople among the horns of the fourth beast, because it belonged to the body of the third." Sir Isaac Newton.

This is plain as the astronomer's doctrine of gravitation. I pity the man who does not read; and I pity the man who hastily reads his Bible, but is too ignorant to enjoy the wonderful picture so plainly de-

lineated in these few verses. Men would teach their children history by causing them to commit verses of this character to memory, and explaining it to them, were it not that they have heretofore valued, and do still value the things of earth alone above every thing besides. I know a little boy and girl who were taught the outline of history and its general features for two thousand years, by lecturing on this chapter several times during the space of twelve hours; so wonderfully does such imagery fix attention, and invigorate the recollection.

"While the prophet was considering these ten horns, he saw another little horn springing up among them. This evidently points out the power of the church and bishop of Rome, which, from small beginnings, thrust itself up among the ten kingdoms, and at length got possession of three of them, having turned out those who held them, namely, the exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of the Lombards, and the state of Rome; and the dominion of the Roman pontiff over these three kingdoms has ever since been denoted by his triple crown. In this horn, as the church of Rome became when it obtained temporal authority, were eyes like the eyes of a man. This circumstance denoted the policy, sagacity, subtlety, and watchfulness by which the little horn would spy out occasions of extending and establishing its interests, and advancing its exorbitant pretensions; and the court of Rome has ever been remarkable for this above all the states in the world, as every person in the least acquainted with history must know. It had also a mouth speaking great things, and we shall

have frequent occasion to speak of the arrogant claims, blasphemous titles, and great swelling words of vanity of this horn. The style of 'his holiness,' and the claim of infallibility, and of a power to dispense with God's laws, to forgive sins, and to sell admission into heaven, may serve as a specimen of the great things which this mouth hath spoken." Scott

This little horn, the pope of Rome, before whom three other horns were plucked up by the roots, has indeed spoken great things. After taking possession of the three thrones, and wearing a triple crown ever after to denote his power, he has claimed that and spoken that which shocks all who read, unless it be those whose feelings are so dull in holy things, that they are not moved at seeing a mortal pretend to all the attributes of Omnipotence.

The twenty-fifth verse informs us that he should wear out the saints of the Most High for a certain period. And it is a fact so well known that he has burnt and slaughtered so many thousands of professors of religion on account of their religion, so many tens of thousands more than any other power ever did, that I need not at present make any remarks on the expression, "wear out the saints," more than simply to quote the expression. The period during which they were to be given into his hand was "a time and times and the dividing of time."

A *time*, one year, *times*, two years, the dividing of time, half a year. These three years and a half contained twelve hundred and sixty days. A prophetic day stood for a year. This period is mentioned so often elsewhere, sometimes called "forty

and two months," sometimes "three and a half years," and sometimes "a thousand two hundred and threescore days," that any who will make themselves acquainted with the page of prophecy will feel at home here. There is nothing difficult or obscure in these periods. We can count twelve hundred and sixty days, and of course can count as many years. According to the ancient and general computation of thirty days to a month, we can know how many days were meant for forty and two months.

"Thus matters will be left in his hands till 'a time and times and the dividing of time,' that is, for three years and a half, or forty-two months, which, reckoning thirty days to a month, and this was the general computation, make just one thousand two hundred and sixty days; and these prophetical days signify just one thousand two hundred and sixty years—a number we shall repeatedly meet with in the Revelation of St. John. At the expiration of this term, which is now not far distant, the dominion of this horn will cease; he will be judged, condemned, and consumed, and his authority never revived to the end of the world." Scott.

The ninth and fourteenth verses inclusive, tell of the casting down other authorities and the setting up of the dominion of the Man of Calvary. So much is told of the grandeur, majesty, splendor, and dreadfulness of the Ancient of days when he comes to pass sentence on the Roman power, to cast his body to the flames, and to overturn all opposers, that many have mistaken it for the final judgment. Although not the final conflagration, these verses do indeed speak

of an awful visitation and of dreadful judgments. These hours of interest and of terror are before us, and we do not know but they are just at hand.

It was once thought that the attention of the wicked would be greatly awakened if they should see the influence of the little horn at Rome over the other horns of Europe begin to decline. They had been told that appearances of the downfall of the Roman authority would be visible at the close of the twelve hundred and sixty days, and they have seen it, but it is looked upon by them without any interest whatever. When the body of the beast is given to the flames, some are to lament; but it is doubtful whether or not they will know that it is God who is doing it. It seems that during the changes and revolutions before us, the red streams of retribution are to roll forth in different directions over the earth; but men will blaspheme God because of their plagues.

APPLICATION. We can improve the subject over which we have glanced, by enumerating the items or particulars which were to take place, and which have taken place since the days of Nebuchadnezzar. In giving this epitome, or making out this catalogue, let no one suppose that all the particulars can be brought into the list. I cannot do this, but I can designate enough to bring before us *the kind of credulity* belonging to those who believe that events have happened such as seemingly fulfil this and other prophecies like it. Those who think that predictions are verified *casually*, are asked concerning the number of accidents in which they believe.

Seventeen hundred years since, infidel writers

were quibbling concerning the facts of history which had taken place, and which belonged to Daniel's prophecy. These particulars seemed to give unbelievers pain, and they endeavored to avoid the truthful inference by saying, that the prophecy must have been written later than the time of Nebuchadnezzar. What will those do who live so many centuries after this plea was first urged? What will they do with that part of the prediction which has been fulfilled during the last fifteen hundred years?

LIST OF HISTORIC ITEMS MENTIONED BY THE PROPHET IN THIS CHAPTER AS TAKING PLACE BETWEEN HIS DAY AND THE PRESENT TIME.

1. The dominion was taken from the Chaldeans, or the lion, and given to the Medes and Persians, or to the bear.

2. The conquests of the Medo-Persian empire were achieved in one direction, that is westwardly. The bear, it is said, "raised up itself on one side."

3. The bear, it is said, had "three ribs in the mouth of it, between the teeth of it." The Persians conquered the kingdoms of Babylon, of Lydia, and of Egypt. They oppressed them, and devoured their revenues and their good things, as a ravenous beast does its prey.

4. The dominion was to be taken from the bear and given to another, the leopard. The Grecians conquered the Persians.

5. Alexander was said to conquer faster than others could march. His victories resembled an army flying through a nation, rather than encamping against it. The leopard had four wings on its back,

representing the unusual rapidity with which the Macedonian dominion would be set up.

6. This beast had four heads. When Alexander died in his drunken revels at Babylon, his kingdom did not descend to his son, or to one or two of his officers; if so, this beast would have had one or two heads; but it was parted between four of his generals, and these four heads had dominion until the fourth beast was grown.

7. The fourth beast, the nameless beast, was to take dominion from the four-headed leopard, devouring and breaking in pieces.

8. This power, the Romans, was to be diverse from all the beasts before it. This is so strikingly understood by all who read only the alphabet of history, that I need not name the instances of dissimilarity.

9. That which this beast could not devour, it was to stamp with his feet. This has already been noticed.

10. It was to be divided into ten kingdoms, represented by the ten horns.

11. This division into ten was to take place exclusive of the Chaldean, Persian, and Macedonian territories; for these beasts, after losing dominion, were still to exist for a season and a time.

12. There was to come up among the ten a little horn, the eleventh horn.

13. This little horn was to pluck up three others by the roots. The bishop of Rome took hold on three kingdoms, denoted by his triple crown which he wears, and has kept them ever since. He did not take

hold on four small kingdoms, for that would have been to pluck up four horns by the root.

14. This little horn was to be watchful, sagacious, and cunning. Every page of his history explains this.

15. High-sounding threats, great swelling words, a mouth speaking great things, a look more stout than his fellows, etc., were to be his characteristics. Whoever will read but half a volume of European history since the pope wore the triple crown, will be at no loss respecting the great words against the Most High.

16. He was to be *diverse* from the first kings. He was a clerical officer.

17. He was to "wear out the saints of the Most High." If we but knew how many hundred thousand he put to death, of the most humble-walking and holy-living people on earth, a work that did not cease for more than a thousand years, we should say that he certainly did wear out the saints of the Most High, if such a thing has ever occurred since the gospel was preached.

18. He was to "think to change times and laws." "Hath not the papal power arrogated the prerogative of making times holy or unholy, contrary to the word of God? He hath commanded men everywhere to abstain from meat and cease from work, when God required no such thing, and has multiplied his holy days, till scarcely four of the six working days have been left for man's labor. At the same time he hath licensed intemperance and excess on his festivals and carnivals, and authorized licentious diversions on the

Lord's own holy day. He hath pretended to change God's laws, or to dispense with obedience to them, that his own new laws might be observed; forbidding to marry, and licensing fornication, and many things of this sort." Scott. He has indeed thought to change times and laws as no one else ever did.

19. His career was to continue for twelve hundred and sixty years—for one thousand two hundred and threescore days; for a time and times and the dividing of time; for forty and two months. Many praying people think the judgment is now sitting, or about to sit.

20. The last item is yet to take place. It is to come to pass hereafter. "One like the Son of man," yea, one who was once born one of the sons of men, will take possession of the whole earth. His kingdom will never be overturned. The greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to people of the saints of the Most High.

The prophet having been very accurate in the first nineteen particulars, and in others not noticed, I, for my part, can credit him for the twentieth. He who can see a train of events so plainly as to picture the outlines of twenty-three centuries, can, with the same assistance, see a century further. The Lord will reign; let the earth rejoice. Who will not clap their hands?

SECOND APPLICATION. If men did not love darkness rather than light, no one would ever have supposed, that for many long centuries prediction and subsequent facts *happened* to fit each other. We may safely say to these worshippers of chance, "Immor

tal friend, according to the same kind of casualty which you have been naming, God will happen to burn up the world, and it will chance that you will be called before his judgment throne, and there examined severely concerning your present conduct towards a bleeding Saviour."

Postscript. In the chapter we have just reviewed, it is not stated how long the ten horns were to last. The continuance of the ten kingdoms is not stated in this part of Daniel's visions, except that they were not to continue long, if at all, after the entire overthrow of the little horn, whose look was so stout and whose words were so blasphemous. But there are other portions of the holy book, where the ten kingdoms and the power which was to wear out the saints are placed in full view before us. In some of these chapters, it seems to be taught that ten horns would be in Europe, and finally be found to hate and to destroy the triple-crowned horn. Some have asked how it could be said that ten kingdoms have existed to represent ten horns, in a part of the earth once under the dominion of Rome, when so many changes have been constantly going on in Europe, and when so many of them have been at times, as it were, consolidated into one. We may reply at any time to such an inquiry very fairly, that the ten horns have been there; that making a kingdom tributary does not take away its existence. If there should have been at times, eleven, twelve, or more horns there for half a century or longer, this does not make it untrue that ten were there. Such inquiries as have been made, and such objections as have been urged, seem

to many as unworthy of an answer; but if a puerile cavil should appear weighty and important in the view of the unthinking or the uninformed, for his sake it needs an answer. Let us then pass briefly through an illustration which may aid us in understanding each other.

Suppose some feeble people should be suffering from the almost constant invasions of numerous and ferocious enemies. Suppose a powerful and benevolent prince sends them word that he will, for a number of years—say thirty—maintain for their safety along their frontier ten garrisons, each to contain one hundred well armed men. Or suppose he is actuated by different designs and moved by other motives; no matter how this is, so that his word is out for the support of a given number of fortifications containing a thousand soldiers. Suppose the forts are built and remain a few years, when two of them are burned to the ground and rebuilt without delay; has there been any violation of the sovereign's word? No, there was no material interruption in the continuance of the walls of strength; furthermore, the troops, the most important part of the safeguard, are still there. Again, suppose the monarch sends and has two posts of strength demolished, but adjoining the spot where these stood, and immediately, he has other two buildings erected more capacious and more desirable; does the promise still stand good? We answer in the affirmative, and we believe no one would differ with us. Finally, suppose in addition to the ten garrisons, it could be shown that for several months during the thirty years, one more had

been maintained there; that for one or two years out of the thirty, there had been there eleven instead of ten fortifications; shall we call it a defect or a failure in the original undertaking? Or shall any seeming interruption, such as has been stated, destroy the propriety of our calling these the ten garrisons of the frontier? The answer is, No, without dispute.

So it is, and so it has been, respecting the ten horns which were to represent ten kingdoms of Europe, once under the Roman sceptre. They have been there for twelve hundred and sixty years. If several have had their names changed according to the caprice of him who conquered, this change of name did not destroy existence. If others have had their territorial limits changed, the nation was still there. If others have fallen while successors were forming in their room, the ten horns were still there. If during a few years out of a thousand, there were more than ten—if some temporary power reared its head, seeming to claim a place with the rest, and soon disappeared, it has not caused the beast to have less than ten horns.

CHAPTER LXVII.

IGNORANCE OF THE BIBLE.

In prosecuting the all-important inquiry, "Is this book from heaven?" I was at last compelled to confess that I had been ignorant of the contents of the Bible. I had read it and heard it all my life, excepting the five or six years of my established infidelity, but of its contents I was darkly ignorant; and I discovered that my unbelieving companions were equally unacquainted with the holy page, and with the literature connected with its contents. I discovered that men had read history recorded after it had been acted, that they had read the same history in the Bible recorded beforehand, and that one was as plain as the other; while most readers noticed it not, observed it not. Instances like this properly enumerated and explained, would swell volumes; but I shall have space for one example only. Or rather, a single case at present must suffice us; for if one specimen will not persuade the reader to look into the Bible, others will fail to win his attention.

Here are instances of reading and not understanding that which is as plain as simple words ever are.

I had read the history of Egypt and of Syria, while the Grecian monarchs sat on those thrones. I knew that Syria was north of Egypt, and of course that a Syrian would call Egypt the kingdom of the south. I had read that Ptolemy Philadelphus king of Egypt had contracted his daughter in marriage

to the king of Syria. Her name was Berenice; she was poisoned in the kingdom of the north, in Syria, and her father died shortly after her. I had read that one from the same root with herself, her brother, had marched an army into Syria, and had prevailed, and had avenged his sister's death. Now, when I read in the eleventh chapter of Daniel, seventh verse, "But out of a branch of her roots shall one stand up in his estate, which shall come with an army, and shall enter into the fortress of the king of the north, and shall deal against them, and shall prevail," I never noticed what the prophet was saying. I passed it by as though there was no meaning, or as though the meaning of a book said to come from heaven was unimportant. One history of Egypt and Syria was as plain as the other. Daniel's is brief. It is an epitome. It was written two hundred and fifty years before Berenice lived, but it is as plain as any thing Russell or Rollin ever wrote of ancient history. At the conclusion of these extracts I will state why I have commenced as far down as the seventh verse. I had read that this brother of Berenice was called *Euergetes*, or benefactor, by the Egyptians; for when he returned, he carried with him thousands of idols and captives, images and nobles of Syria, also much of gold which the son of Cyrus had long before taken away from Egypt. He outlived the king of Syria, with whom he had been fighting, several years. What must I have thought when I read in the eighth and ninth verses, "He shall also carry captives into Egypt their gods, with their princes, and with their precious vessels of silver and of gold; and he shall

continue more years than the king of the north. So the king of the south shall come into his kingdom, and shall return into his own land."

When I read this, I thought nothing or almost nothing of the passage—a passage where accurate and important history yet to come was written in few but plain words. I had partly forgotten, or remembered but dimly, the items mentioned so strangely on the wonderful page; and furthermore, we observe, and we understand, and we recollect any thing else with thrice the speed and aptitude with that which we exert towards any thing in the book of books. There it is again true, that skilful men surpass themselves in framing objections, building difficulties, or weaving webs of ingenuity to perplex others or to quiet conscience.

I had read that the sons of the king of Syria being greatly provoked, assembled great forces, intending to vanquish the king of the south. That one of them did push the war even to the very border of Egypt, and was likely to go into the very land of his adversary. This so aroused the Egyptian monarch, that he collected his ablest forces, went out to fight the king of the north, and obtained a speedy and most decisive victory over his enemy: but he was not strengthened by it; for instead of pursuing his advantage, he was so elated and joyful that he gave himself up to feasting, to drunkenness, and to the most disgusting debaucheries. I read in this same chapter,

"But his sons shall be stirred up, and shall assemble a multitude of great forces; and one shall certainly come, and overflow, and pass through; then

shall he return, and be stirred up, even to his fortress. And the king of the south shall be moved with choler, and shall come forth and fight with him, even with the king of the north; and he shall set forth a great multitude, but the multitude shall be given into his hand. And when he hath taken away the multitude, his heart shall be lifted up, and he shall cast down many ten thousands; but he shall not be strengthened by it."

The next four verses give us a clear and plain account of the history of Syria and Egypt. Very much is contained in few words. We will first repeat the verses, and then note the remark of commentators.

"For the king of the north shall return, and shall set forth a multitude greater than the former, and shall certainly come after certain years with a great army and with much riches. And in those times there shall many stand up against the king of the south: also the robbers of thy people shall exalt themselves to establish the vision; but they shall fall. So the king of the north shall come, and cast up a mount, and take the most fenced cities; and the arms of the south shall not withstand, neither his chosen people, neither shall there be any strength to withstand. But he that cometh against him shall do according to his own will, and none shall stand before him; and he shall stand in the glorious land, which by his hand shall be consumed."

The following are the historic facts as enumerated, written by the hand of Scott.

"After some years, Antiochus king of Syria, or of the north, recovered from the effects of his late

defeat, and Ptolemy Philopater king of Egypt being dead, and succeeded by his son Ptolemy Epiphanes, who was only four or five years of age, Antiochus raised a greater army than before, and amassed vast sums of money to defray the expenses of the war, by which he hoped to deprive the minor king of his dominions. And at the same time that Antiochus marched his army to attack the Egyptian provinces, many other enemies stood up against the young king. For the conduct of his father, and of those abandoned ministers who now governed in his name, had so disgusted the Egyptians that they were ready to join Antiochus; and Philip king of Macedon made a league with him against Ptolemy, stipulating to divide his kingdom between them. The persecuted Jews also became refractory, and broke off from their allegiance to the king of Egypt to join Antiochus, for this seems to be the meaning of the words translated, 'the robbers of thy people.' These revolters exalted themselves against their former masters, and so helped to establish or to accomplish this vision, or prophecy; but they were reduced by Ptolemy's forces, who, under Scopas, gained many advantages against those of Antiochus. However, the presence of that prince turned the scale in his favor, for he soon recovered what Scopas had taken, and besieged and took Zidon, and others of Ptolemy's best fortified cities. So that the king of Egypt could not withstand his arms, even with his choicest troops, but he carried all before him, and succeeded in his designs, and established his authority in the land of Judah, the glorious land of God's chosen people, and of his

special presence, which was by him consumed in furnishing subsistence to his troops; or rather, it was by him established, as some render the word, for it was favored, and prospered greatly under his government."

From what we have transcribed, every thinking reader can fairly see and understand the following fact. Should any one desire to impress vividly upon his recollection the leading points of history belonging to many of the most conspicuous nations of the earth, generation after generation, he has only to remember a few such chapters as this from which we have been quoting, and his task is accomplished. God, in telling his people, or "the wise," of the future calamities or welfare of his church, spoke of course about those nations which favored or which oppressed his children.

The prophets, or those historians who wrote many centuries before the events transpired, comprised more facts in few words, and used expressions more striking to the lively fancy, and more vividly, distinctly, and historically correct, than any others who ever held a pen. I need not go on through the chapter before us. Like many others, it contains a history of those who hated or those who favored the church, down to our day, and a little beyond us. Those who wish, can read the holy book, and read profane history, and hold them side by side, or they can look at the labors of commentators, who have done this for us, and thereby saved us much toil. I shall copy only one more verse, inviting the reader to become familiar with all the rest of the prophecy, for his own good.

Antiochus strove to get possession of Egypt. He

mustered all his strength, and put forth all his energies. He exerted all his ingenuity to get advantage of Ptolemy by treaty. He hoped to have some assistance by giving his daughter in marriage. Ptolemy took her, and she, the famous Cleopatra, became queen of Egypt; yet she did not help her designing father, but preferred the interests of her husband, and aided him with all her influence. The Jews, called *upright ones*, helped Antiochus in his attempts against Egypt. Daniel, verse seventeenth, informed the Israelites of all these events, in the following words:

"He shall also set his face to enter with the strength of his whole kingdom, and upright ones with him; thus shall he do: and he shall give him the daughter of women, corrupting her; but she shall not stand on his side, neither be for him."

I cannot transcribe every singular and beautiful prophecy in the Bible, for then the size of this volume would deter many from reading it. I commenced at the seventh verse, because the history thereafter foretold was that which followed the days of the king who had the Old Testament translated into Greek. The prophecy of Daniel had been written between two and three hundred years before it found its way to the Alexandrian library. But inasmuch as infidels, as well as Christians, speak of this Greek copy, called the Septuagint, I concluded to quote only those predictions which came to pass after the translation was made. Not finding it expedient to remark on all the chapter, I have noticed a portion of the part for which we have the authority of scoffers respecting the priority of its date.

CHAPTER LXVIII.

THE LAST RESORT.

While reading, I found evidence against my system of infidelity wherever I turned, such as meets every one who ventures to read closely. There was one process of investigation, and only one which was left for me to pursue, unless I yielded. That process was to cast away all records and traditions, to sit down and endeavor to decide the question by the aid of reason alone. This seemed inviting. It seemed to make man his own judge. I had always heard my companions the deists calling reason the celestial lamp, the only light, the polar star, and other names of triumphant admiration. I felt a disposition, as it seemed to me, to walk along the path of reason quietly and alone, and to notice objects on either hand fairly and deliberately. I made the attempt, and the following is something of the result of my last resort.

The goodness of God. This seemed to be a starting point, and one of the first facts to fix on. My associates were willing to speak of the goodness of God, and I thought I saw it manifested, while I looked over creation. I saw fruit drop from the overloaded tree. I saw the full crop wave in the field, and barns crowded at home. The breeze that passed me in summer was fresh and fragrant. The cold spring was delightful to the parched palate. The flower was fashioned to please the eye which rested

on it. The hum of the grove and the gush of the waterfall were calculated to communicate happiness through the ear In short, the indications of a Creator's kindness were in every direction, and in number really countless. I thought that nothing was more rational than to fix upon it as a certain truth, that *the Maker of all things is good.* To settle down upon this doctrine was pleasing enough, except that certain contingent facts intruded themselves. They were calculated to produce some degree of uneasiness, especially if followed out in all their bearings. The first fact and the inquiries it excited were as follows: The Christians speak as loudly of the kindness, the daily kindness, and the benevolence of God as we do. Have they learned it of us, or have we learned of them; or how is it that we agree?

SECOND FACT. Although we think that our reason has discovered the goodness and the purity of God so plainly, yet pagans who had no guide but reason, have always worshipped him as revengeful and polluted. The ancient enlightened nations, the Greeks, and then the Romans, with so much learning, sung about the intrigues and adulteries, the frauds and the cruelties of their deities, although they had no Bible to interrupt their reason. Out of all the nations that do exist, or ever did exist without our Scriptures, might not reason have taught some one of them the goodness and the purity of God? Might not their sages be able to give a character of God, something nearly as correct as we can hear from the most unlearned with us? In the following unadorned fact, there was something fitted to excite the fear that the

army of deists had received their knowledge, either directly or circuitously, from the book which they disowned. It is a fact, that were I to go to ten hundred thousand of the most learned Asiatics or other pagans now alive, one after another, and hear them speak of God, I should not receive a character half as correct, according to the creed of deists, as that which I might obtain from the first ten ploughmen I met, provided there was a Bible and a meeting-house in the land where they lived. I knew that reason could see through the mysteries of gunpowder in the course of a minute after it is explained; but it was long before the discovery was made. I knew that reason assents to the first principles of astronomy, as soon as they are presented; nothing appears plainer: but reason was long in finding out these truths. Thus I could not tell but that, although, as soon as the Bible informs those who hate it in Christian lands of certain truths about God, nothing appears plainer to them, they may think they have always known it, while the most energetic minds where the Bible is not do not learn so fast. They certainly never have been known to find out the excellence and purity of Omnipotence, unassisted. Although somewhat suspicious that this doctrine of the unbounded goodness, and wisdom, and power, and purity of God, had first been taught by one book alone, knowing it to be true I concluded to rest upon it as so, and to look around for other facts, or for rational and plain inferences.

Doctrines inquired after. The following questions and facts commingled would pass in succession through my mind.

We agree that God is good, and wise, and kind, like a tender parent. Having cast away the Scriptures, we agree that God has not told us certainly whether we live again after death or not. He has not told us, if we do live, how long it is to be—seventy years again, or longer? I knew that reason could not decide these inquiries; because no three of my associates, the advocates of reason, out of all I could meet with, ever agreed on these particulars. According to our belief, he has not told us, if we live hereafter, whether it is to be in connection with a body or not. I should like to know. We are not told whether we are to be judged or not for what we do to-day. It would be well to know this. Shall we live always? Will our judgment be severe? Will there be sickness in the next state, or is it all health? Those who admire reason most do not know, for two of them do not believe alike. Reason has not taught; of course it is an uncertain guide, or there is no information given us. I thought the color of the rainbow a token of the Creator's kindness; but I would rather it had been black, than not to have known whether I am to live after I am buried. I wish he had told me. I thought that our Father made the color of the forest leaf green, because it fits the eye; but I would agree it should be red always hereafter, if I could only find out whether or not I am to be *judged* for my conduct. Is my every-day conduct to be reviewed hereafter? I wish our Father had told us. It would not have been hard for him to have done this, or cost much time. Thus I was tossed from point to point of several sharp prominences.

To say that reason was our heavenly lamp, and that her worshippers had never yet discovered these things, or that they discovered differently, for they thought differently, was somewhat awkward. To say that I must act every minute, and yet it was not very important for me to know whether or not I was ever to be tried for my actions, did not sound smoothly. To say that reason had taught us what our Creator hated most, was too hard, because the disciples of reason all differed fundamentally here also; some thought one way and some another. To say that I need not know what pleased or displeased him most, was still unharmonious. I began to doubt whether "the celestial lamp" of reason would show me objects more distinctly than the page of Matthew.

CHAPTER LXIX.

THE LAST RESORT.

If I sat down and inquired of reason soberly, whether the great First Cause had made man as we now find him, or we are a fallen race, I found the pathway more than cloudy. If I said that man is a fallen creature, and did not come as he now is from the pure hand, I seemed to be running into the old Bible track. If I said that men were not wicked, that a majority of them were not depraved, it seemed to sound sweetly, and to harmonize with what all my companions said when together and while disputing on religious doctrines. But when deists talk elsewhere, when they speak, having forgotten all controversy, their testimony is not the same. I heard one of them speaking of a class of men opposed to him in politics. He pronounced them utterly destitute of principle. He declared them dishonest in every thing; and when excited, would mingle curses with his expressions of contempt. When speaking of those who were called the pious, the devotedly pious, he was also severe. Their zeal he called either fanaticism or hypocrisy, often both. When dealing with his fellow-men, he always took notes, bonds, etc., and was as certain to treat every one as though he was defective, as they are who believe in man's depravity. In short, I found the three following facts to exist in the world.

1. Those who denied the fall of man spoke as complainingly, when not discussing the doctrine, of the prevalence of slander, of avarice, selfishness, etc., as did the disciples of the Bible.

2. They spoke from day to day of having discovered something censurable in those of whom they had thought better; but it was not a matter of continuous occurrence for them to speak of surprise at having found one and another more honest, disinterested, and amiable than they were supposed to be.

3. The following question is answered by the candid with entire agreement. Suppose you were to take a number of children and try to teach them all that is lovely and good; again, take an equal number, and try to teach them all that is bad and unlovely: in which case would you most readily succeed? In which are children the more apt scholars, in honor, honesty, self-denial, temperance, humility, etc., or in haughtiness, self-conceit, ignorance, sensuality, injustice, etc.? I believed that the man who would say "our race is not fallen into sin so as to make it easier for us to be taught vice than virtue," had been handling sin himself, and that it did not appear unlovely to him.

I believed that those who admit the three facts stated above, might as well admit the fall of man.

I believed that he who, after looking fairly around on his fellow-creatures, denied these three facts, had certainly fallen himself, if others had not.

CHAPTER LXX.

CONCLUDING SUMMARY.

I HAD been told, and I could not dispute it, that God was a being of *infinitudes*. Christians and unbelievers agreed that there was no boundary line belonging to his wisdom, his power, or the number of his days. They said that there was no possibility of numbering the animals or the worlds he had made; that there was no limit to creation. And all the glasses through which the philosopher looked spoke the same language.

If *endless* might be written on his works around us, I could not tell but that it might be his plan for our existence to be endless. I hoped it might be so, for annihilation always looked dark to me. At times it seemed as though it would be cruel, if, after making me taste the cup of existence, he should dash it from my lips. I should prefer never having been, to giving up my *identity* at death. I was ready to exclaim, "My Maker might have told me how long I am to exist;" but the Bible seemed to reply, "He has." If my feelings called out that a Being of infinite goodness might have offered me the glorious prize of unending happiness on some terms, the Bible seemed to reply, "He has."

I knew that the soul which inhabits these bodies was in the habit of craving. It has been so made that it craves, and craves much happiness, hating any decay in its felicity. I thought that if in a shin-

ing country, where nothing cold or gloomy was ever to enter, and in a society of beings peaceful and beautiful, I should be offered joys which were never to diminish, it would indeed be a prize. O what a prize! This would resemble what it would take a God to offer, a God of benevolence. Who knows but our God may have made us this offer? The Bible seemed to say, "He has." I thought if any one man had this offer, he had good reason to leap for joy. Has this offer been extended to any one? The Bible seemed to answer, "To all." And are the terms easy? I knew that, if I listened to that book, the answer was *bare acceptance;* and I could not complain that it was added, "Nothing unjust or unclean must be taken into that abode."

A collateral inquiry presented itself, which was this, "What does reason say concerning the offer, if it is made, or if it ever should be intended, Can man reject, or forfeit it; neglect or turn away from it?" I looked around me upon facts which none could question. I saw that amidst the train of our mercies and enjoyments health is not the least, yet thousands are casting it from them utterly and for ever. I looked into a family—peace would sweeten all their joys; yet how many cast it from them, and their happiness expires. I could not look at any good thing between the earth and skies, which man might not trample on. And I did not know but in one more instance he might turn away from an offered favor, namely, *the offer of heaven.*

If the Creator does not depart from his usual method, he will not compel me to receive any favor.

What if he should act consistently with every other feature of his work, and leave it possible for me to turn away from everlasting joys?

I found that wherever I turned, and in whatever direction I looked, common-sense, reason, and reflection pronounced a solemn amen to every doctrine taught in that fearful and precious book. I found that all the truth to which reason ever assented had been first taught by revelation.

After reading a book called "Doddridge's Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul;" also "Baxter's Saints' Everlasting Rest;" after wading through many mistakes concerning the way in which a soul was directed to turn to God, I came to certain conclusions, like the following.

Conclusion. If I am ordered to live peaceably with all men, hoping at last to reach the land of peace, it would not hurt me if I tried to obey.

I need not blame the Bible if it prohibits all gluttony, sensuality, and improper indulgence of appetite; for greater energies of body and of soul are secured to those who listen and comply.

I am not injured when I am told to compassionate the suffering, because those who strive to relieve the afflicted are always made more happy.

I need not grow angry at the page of inspiration, if all profanity is forbidden there; for those who violate that precept, only have their dignity lessened in the eye of others, while they reap no profit and receive no gain.

If I am told that life is brief and its termination hastening, that pleasures around us here are very

transitory, and that afflictions will meet us, I need not complain, for it is certainly true. These admonitions do not delude me.

There is no unkindness in the call, if I am invited to think of a habitation very bright, exceedingly beautiful, where death can never enter, and where the tear-drop was never seen. If I am told to lift my eyes towards a world where want was never known; where the song is always singing; and where the lovely, the splendid company may increase, but never will diminish, I am not unwise, if I ask, "How am I to get there?"

If I am told that those who desire this prize are directed to express their wishes for it to One who can hear the lowest whisper, I cannot say there is any great difficulty in such an undertaking.

If I am told that this Hearer of requests once became MAN, and that all my ill deserts—I have done wrong so often that I do not know how much of his frown I do merit—he bore in his own body on the tree, that I may escape suffering, I can never say the offer is not a kind one. If all are invited to apply, I am included in the number.

I may conclude that I am sincere in my requests, if I am willing to begin a battle now with sin.

I will try, and I will ask for help. *For ever* is a distant journey, and I will try. Boundless joys may be coveted. The struggle shall be commenced to-day, and I will seek for aid. There is a loveliness in doing right. "O Lord, I have sinned against heaven and before thee, and am not worthy to be called thy son."

BRIEF SKETCH

OF

THE AUTHOR'S LIFE.

The author of this striking work, which has been blessed in bringing scores of infidels to Christ, and of which not far from 100,000 copies have been circulated, was eminent as an intelligent infidel physician, and then as an able minister of Christ. He loved much, for he had much forgiven.

He was born September 24, 1793, near Jonesborough, East Tennessee; and died at Quincy, Illinois, October 17, 1844, aged 51. His parents were from Virginia, his father an officer of the church, and his mother, who was of Scotch descent, eminently pious. In childhood and youth he was sedate and contemplative, his mind seeming to receive an impress from the lofty and romantic scenery around the Nolachucky, near the banks of which he was reared. At twelve he thought himself converted, and soon entered Washington College, near his father's residence, at which he graduated at sixteen, when he proceeded to Danville, Kentucky, where his elder brother was then settled in the ministry, and entered on the study of medicine with the celebrated Dr. Ephraim McDowell.

At nineteen, just as he was entering on the practice of medicine, he joined himself as surgeon to a Kentucky regiment then proceeding to Canada in the war with Great Britain, where he suffered every privation. In one march, in the severe cold and deep snows of a wild Indian territory, exhausted by hunger and fatigue, he suffered himself to be left unobserved, and resolved there to lie down and die. But his friend and cousin, the brave

Col. Allen, who afterwards fell at Tippecanoe, missed him, went back, roused him from his deathlike slumber, took him on his powerful horse, and thus saved him for the work God had appointed him to do. Returning from his northern campaign, he entered on the practice of medicine in Jonesborough; but at the call of Generals Jackson and Coffee, he enlisted again as surgeon of a regiment for the South, and in the wilds of Alabama flooded with rain was seized by fever, reduced to the utmost extremity, but raised up, and at Mobile on the eve of an expected battle, received the news of peace.

He returned to Jonesborough, resumed his profession, at twenty-two married a daughter of David Deaderick, to whom allusion is made in his work as a highly respected infidel merchant of Tennessee, and became eminent as a physician, his practice extending into neighboring counties, and bringing him an income of some $3,000 a year, which he at length relinquished that he might win souls to Christ in the ministry.

In the pursuit of medical science, while infidelity swayed the higher circles, and the works of Volney, Voltaire, and Paine were in high repute, Dr. Nelson—like many who in early life obtained a false hope of their conversion—was led to believe that he had been self-deceived, and that all religion, and the Bible itself, was a delusion. He became *an honest unreflecting deist*, in which scepticism he was but confirmed by his connection with the army and his subsequent relations in life.

The wonderful processes of his mind in giving up this infidelity, by reluctantly detecting the dishonesty and unfairness of Voltaire and other infidel writers, and by a patient, intelligent examination of the whole subject in his own heart, in the lives and conduct of believers and unbelievers, in practical writings, and especially in the word of God, form perhaps the most interesting portion of his now celebrated work. It is hard for any reader to question his sincerity, the stern integrity, patience, and thoroughness of his investigation, or doubt that he was led by the Holy Spirit in the true and right way.

At the age of twenty-five he joined the Presbyterian church, of which his father was an elder, deploring his long rejection of the Saviour he now delighted to honor, and resolving to redeem

the time by the unreserved consecration of all his powers to him. At first his diffidence scarcely allowed him to lead others in prayer; but his inventive mind, warm heart, and ceaseless energy found many means of usefulness, including the wide circulation of good books, while in his extensive medical practice. It is stated that a sermon he heard from the lamented Dr. Cornelius, who passed through Tennessee, fired his mind with the most enlarged missionary spirit, which expired only with his life.

At about the age of thirty-three he gave himself publicly to the ministry of reconciliation, assisted for a time in editing a religious periodical, and was soon installed in Danville, Kentucky, where he had imbibed his infidelity, as successor of his worthy deceased brother, who had done so much for the church and college there. He soon proved that he had indeed been called to the work of the ministry. He became "a burning and a shining light," not only to his own congregation, but far and wide throughout the state, where the rich effusions of the Spirit abundantly attended his labors; and it was those revivals which were the manifest precursors of the great revival of 1831, which extended throughout the land, and added to the churches more than one hundred thousand souls. He seemed to imbibe, in measure, the whole spirit of our Lord. In personal efforts for the salvation of individuals, he labored like Harlan Page. In the pulpit, his tall, manly form and kindled eye, his frankness and generosity of spirit, the gushing love of his heart for souls, his bold, free, original eloquence, his powerful appeals to the heart and conscience, his full and clear exhibition of Christ and his salvation, attracted and fixed the attention of his hearers. And his missionary spirit was large as the world. Especially was his attention directed to the moral wastes, and the training of pious young men, who were then brought into the church in such numbers, for the ministry and missionary work at home and abroad.

It was this spirit that led him to plan and lay the foundation of Marion College in Missouri, for which he visited our Eastern cities, where his fervent appeals at once for money and for the salvation of his hearers, endeared him to tens of thousands. Unexpected events thwarting his expectations in Missouri, he

transferred his efforts to forming a somewhat similar establishment at Quincy, Illinois, freely to educate young men as ministers and missionaries. But in the midst of these exhausting efforts, in which he expended all his personal means, he was attacked with epilepsy or paralysis, which gradually unfitted him for labor, and terminated his life at the age of 51.

He wrote the Cause and Cure of Infidelity about 1836, in the first summer of his residence in Illinois, chiefly under the shade of four large oaks, drawing mainly from the resources of his own mind and memory. He also wrote another treatise entitled "Wealth and Honor," breathing a missionary spirit as expansive as the ruins of the fall, summoning the whole energies of the church of God for the world's redemption, and showing that *her wealth* and *her honor* were in rescuing lost souls, and adding them as gems to the Redeemer's crown. He carried this work to the East for publication, but it is now supposed to be irrecoverably lost.

In his declining health, and often in severe suffering, he mourned mainly that he could not preach the gospel and labor to win sinners to Christ; but he murmured not against the divine will. When the hour of his departure drew nigh, he called to him his wife and so many of his eleven children as were near, saying, "My Master calls. I am going home. Kiss me, my children, and take your last farewell, for I shall soon be in a state of insensibility, and shall not know you." He expressed his wishes in various respects, and then said, "It is well," and slumbered till the resurrection-morn.

His body rests in the cemetery at Woodland, near Quincy Illinois, where a neat monument bears the following inscription.

"Rev. David Nelson, M. D., author of the Cause and Cure of Infidelity, born in East Tennessee, September 24, 1793—a surgeon in the United States army—a distinguished physician in his native state—a devoted minister of Christ in Danville Kentucky—a messenger of grace to multitudes—a founder of institutions of learning. Died October 17, 1844, aged 51.

"Erected by friends in New York."

Dr. Nelson well knew the power of sacred music, and sometimes composed hymns which were sung on the occasions on which he preached, two of which are annexed.

REST IN HEAVEN.

Sleep not, the Saviour cries,
On this low, earthly ground;
Press on—above the skies,
There shall your rest be found.

CHORUS.—Where the pilgrim reposes, the fields are all green,
There day never closes, nor clouds intervene:
O the forms that are there, such as eye hath not seen;
O the songs they sing there, with hosannas between,
While the river of life flows freely.

On earth cold storms arise,
And clouds obscure the sun;
For rest the pilgrim sighs—
But there his work is done.—CHORUS.

My soul, be not dismayed,
But gird thee for the race:
I'll ask his hourly aid
To reach that happy place.—CHORUS.

A FAIRER LAND.

'T was told me in life's early day,
That pleasure's stream did flow
Gently beside life's peaceful way—
I have not found it so.

I thought there grew on earthly ground
Some buds without decay;
But not a single flower I've found
That does not fade away.

I wish to see a fairer land—
I've heard of one on high,
Where every tear by one kind hand
Is wiped from every eye.

'T is said the King of that bright place
Still welcomes travellers there:
O come, then, let us seek his grace—
Unseen, he hears our prayer.

HELPS TO BIBLE STUDY.

The Family Bible, Royal Octavo, Revised Edition.

With brief Notes and Instructions, Marginal References, an Introduction to each book, a Harmony of the Gospels, new Maps, Tables of Patriarchs, Prophets, and Apostles, Bible Chronology, and a Family Record. For general use in family worship and Bible study. 1,504 pages. In one volume sheep, or three volumes cloth.

Family Testament and Psalms,

With Notes, etc. A beautiful volume of 524 pages super-royal 8vo.

Pocket Testament,

With Notes, Maps, etc. 18mo, 810 pages.

A Dictionary of the Holy Bible,

For general use in the study of the Scriptures, with five Maps, Chronological and other Tables, and two hundred and fifty Engravings. 534 pages, large 12mo.

Bible Atlas and Gazetteer,

Royal octavo, 32 pages, with six fine maps, a list of all the geographical names in Scripture, and valuable Tables.

Cruden's Condensed Concordance.

A fine edition. 561 pages, 8vo.

Locke's Commonplace-Book to the Holy Bible.

412 pages 8vo.

The Bible Text-Book,

Or the principal Texts relating to the Persons, Places, and Subjects occurring in the Holy Scriptures. Colored Maps, and Tables. 280 pages, 18mo.

Youth's Bible Studies,

Complete in six parts. Part I. The Pentateuch. II. Historical Books. III. The Prophets. IV. Poetical Books. V. The Gospels. VI. The Acts, Epistles, etc. In a set with case.

Gallaudet's Youth's Scripture Biography,

Complete in eleven volumes. 49 Engravings. In a case.

Published and for sale by the AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY, 150 Nassau-street, New York; BOSTON, 40 Cornhill; ROCHESTER, 75 State-street; PHILADELPHIA, 929 Chestnut-street; BALTIMORE, 73 West-Fayette-street; CINCINNATI, 163 Walnut-street; CHICAGO, 170 Clark-street; ST. LOUIS, 9 South-Fifth-street; and to be had of the principal booksellers.

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: August 2005

PreservationTechnologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 014 244 399 5